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YOUNG INDIANA JONES AND THE CHILD LAMA

Richard Beugné



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and the
Child Lama

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An Ill-Tempered Lieutenant

August 1913, in the Himalayas

“Plague take this blasted nag!”

The man who had just shouted those words was none other than Henry Jones, Indiana’s father. But with his ten-day beard, his wool cap, and his fur coat that made him look like a Cossack, the famous professor was unrecognizable. Painfully, he swung his leg over his mount’s neck and slid to the ground.

Far ahead of him, up the steep path, stretched a line of yaks and horses.

The yaks carried goods, the horses bore soldiers and Buddhist monks dressed in their orange robes and

golden-yellow headpieces. Indiana was among them.

Wearing his famous Stetson, he rode a magnificent light-colored stallion. He was about fifty yards ahead of his father.

“You’re mocking me, you blasted mule!” yelled Henry Jones.

At these shouts, the young adventurer stopped his horse and waited.

“What are you doing?” he asked his father once the professor had caught up. “Why are you stopping again? That’s the third time in two hours and we’re not there yet—not even close!”

“This is intolerable! This mule’s tossing me around like a sack of potatoes and grinding my spine to mush. I swear he’s doing it on purpose—I’ve had more than enough!”

At these words, the animal curled back its lips and made a kind of grimace that showed its yellow-green teeth.

“You see? He’s mocking me!”

“Oh come on, Dad! That poor beast isn’t to blame for your misery. You’re just out of shape. You’re more used to cushioned chairs than saddles hard as wood. So naturally...”

“What do you mean, cushioned chairs? From the

sound of it, you'd think I spend all my time in a chaise lounge!" protested Henry Jones.

"That's not what I meant..."

"But that's what I heard," grumbled the American scholar.

"Come on, have some courage, Prof.!" said Indiana. "There's not much left before we reach the monastery."

"You call this a path! It's more like a disgusting mudslide! All it takes is for this blasted mule to slip and I'll go flying to my death," retorted Professor Jones, still standing motionless beside the beast. "I'm not asking for a paved road, but still, they could keep their paths a little better. I don't know if I can keep going—I'm dead on my feet. I'd rather be sitting peacefully, enjoying a nice cup of tea!"

"Don't forget how much trouble we had just getting permission to come here. Instead of focusing on the worst, you should take in the view. It's incredible. Just think—we're in the highest region on Earth, where the Roof of the World rises over 26,000 feet. No one's ever reached its summit! Except the gods, of course!"

The boy looked radiant. He seemed thrilled to be

here. He stretched out his arm and made a sweeping gesture.

All around them, wild nature stretched as far as the eye could see. Rockslides blanketed the base of towering cliffs. Beyond the ridges rose snow-covered peaks so tall they seemed to touch the sky. While Indy and his father stood in the shade, the mountain snow still glowed in the ocher light of the sun.

“You’re right, son,” sighed Henry Jones. “That view is worth a little suffering.”

“Besides, if all goes well, tonight we’ll be sleeping at the Tsadong monastery, where you’ll see the very old sage Bobkar Rimpotché, your friend.”

“That’s true, Juni...”

“Dad!” the young American cut in. “I’ve asked you a hundred thousand times already.”

“Sorry, son. I just can’t get used to it. ‘Indiana’—it’s such a ridiculous name!”

“Maybe it is. But it’s the one I chose.”

The professor had just gotten back in the saddle when a galloping horse suddenly appeared. It stopped short, flinging up a spray of mud. Its rider, a soldier with a bony face and eagle-like eyes, called out to them in a harsh, gravelly voice:

“Hey, you Tchilingas, that’s enough! This is a lousy time to play tourists!”

“We’re not playing tourists, Lieutenant. We’re just taking time to admire this fantastic landscape,” replied Henry Jones sharply.

“That doesn’t give you the right to drag behind. You’re holding up the entire caravan and there’s barely two hours of daylight left to reach the pass! At the rate you’re going, you won’t get there before tomorrow!”

“You’re exaggerating, Lieutenant! We’ve got plenty of time to make it.”

“Absolutely not,” the soldier barked. “You’re slower than snails!”

“Snail? I won’t stand here and let you insult me!”

The argument escalated. Since the start of the expedition, Lieutenant Nyak-Tso had been hostile toward the professor and his son. In fact, it had taken long negotiations just to get him to let them join the group he was escorting to the monastery. There was an important figure in the caravan—one of the highest-ranking representatives of the Buddhist religion after the Dalai Lama.

When he’d heard about this wise religious figure

named Dentsen, Indiana had expected to meet a very stern and serious old man. But he'd been stunned when they introduced him: this high dignitary was about his own age—fourteen—with a mischievous look, a cheeky grin, a contagious joy for life, and endless curiosity. The two boys had instantly become friends. Now, they were traveling together.

“You may be some big-shot professor known the world over, I don't care,” the soldier barked, yanking on his thoroughbred's reins. “Out here, I'm in charge. You follow my orders, period!”

Crimson with fury, the professor was about to snap back just as fiercely. But Indiana stepped in:

“Very well, Lieutenant. We'll pick up the pace.”

“I'd hope so!” Nyak-Tso said curtly. “This is the last time I wait for you. Especially with the weather turning. I'm warning you: there's a storm coming.”

With that, the soldier spurred his horse and rode off to catch up with the others.

“That officer's one of the most unpleasant people I've ever met. The devil can take him,” muttered Henry Jones.

With that, he urged his mount forward again.

A Storm in the Air

Indiana rode part of the way with his father. Unfortunately, the professor wasn't much of a rider, and his mule—a poor, limping creature—barely moved faster than a tortoise. As soon as the trail sloped steeply upward, it ran out of breath.

Soon, they reached a point where the path narrowed into a sort of ledge.

“It's safer to go on foot,” decided Indiana.

“Thanks for the advice, but I had no intention of playing the hero! I'm not as bold as you are!”

Clearly, Professor Jones was quick to irritation.

Still, Indiana didn't hold it against him. The three days they'd just spent in harsh conditions would have worn out seasoned riders. The professor certainly wasn't used to this kind of trek.

"I'm too old for an adventure like this," muttered the American scholar. "My old bones can't take eight hours straight on the back of a mule, and even less sleeping on the bare ground."

"But you're about to see your old friend, Bobkar Rimpotché."

"Thank goodness! Otherwise, I would've turned back already."

"You'll also get to study the monastery's rare Buddhist texts," added Indy.

"Rare, you're not wrong. There are some very ancient books there that are worth a fortune...and I haven't even mentioned the gold statues, the prayer scrolls, and all the other sacred objects—they're priceless."

As he spoke of these wonders, Henry Jones looked like he was savoring a sweet. And just like that, his fatigue vanished.

"So then, it's a real treasure!" exclaimed Indy.

"A treasure—exactly! And it's never been



catalogued or described by any Western scholar. But I intend to be the first to do it. A week should be more than enough. Especially if you help me.”

Pretending he hadn’t heard, Indiana didn’t reply. Shuffling through papers and dusty trinkets wasn’t on his agenda. He had no intention of staying cooped up between four walls lit only by a candle. He was thinking more of running through the mountains and meeting the people who lived there.

As they talked, they came out onto a sort of plateau. Here, the trail widened.

“Look, Dad, the pass isn’t far now,” cried Indiana, thrilled to change the subject.

“Still way too far!” grumbled Henry Jones, who was once again thinking of stopping.

“Oh come on, just a little more effort. If you pick up the pace, we’ll be there in under an hour.”

No sooner had he said that than Indiana pressed his heels into his mount’s flanks. He’d had enough of waiting. He galloped off, straight up the slope.

“Indiana!!!” roared the professor.

“I’ll wait for you at the top!” the boy shouted

back. But he was already too far for his father to hear him.

First, he passed some mules just as weary as his father's. The poor, bony creatures staggered under their loads. Then came the yaks. These strange beasts, like prehistoric animals with their woolly fur, cow-like eyes, and long horns, were incredibly strong. They carried loads of unbelievable variety: food, fabric, all sorts of tools and containers.

In five minutes, Indiana caught up with the bulk of the caravan led by Nyak-Tso. A real traveling bazaar. In the middle, surrounded by servants and masters, was the young Dentsen. Bareheaded, with a shaven scalp, draped in a long cloth that left one shoulder exposed, the Child Lama smiled. He looked peaceful and calm, showing no signs of strain from the journey. When he spotted Indiana, he immediately beckoned him over.

Responding to the invitation, Indy headed toward his new friend. But Lieutenant Nyak-Tso had other ideas. He whipped his horse forward and blocked the path to stop Indy.

“Stop right there, you arrogant little Tchilinga! Get out of here!”

In Tibetan, a language the young American didn't understand, the Child Lama asked the lieutenant a question. Nyak-Tso explained in English:

"This boy is dangerous. He mustn't approach you."

"Dangerous?" replied Dentsen. "And why is that? Has he got the plague or some other deadly illness he might give me?"

"I... I don't think so," hesitated the soldier, thrown off by the young Tibetan's reaction. "But he's a foreigner and..."

"Enough!" Dentsen cut in. "I don't want to hear another word. We're all foreigners to someone. Let my friend through."

Amused, Indiana shot a mocking face at the lieutenant. The disgruntled man turned away. Soon after, the two boys were riding side by side.

"I'd like you to continue the story you started earlier. The one in the Far North, with the Eskimos."

"Oh yeah!" said Indy. "That was a strange adventure. Full of danger. I only made it through thanks to the supernatural powers a sorcerer gave me."

“Interesting! Very interesting!” said the Child Lama, his eyes wide. “We have supernatural things here too. For example, I’m the reincarnation of Gisha, a very wise Lama who died about thirty years ago.”

“Reincar—what?”

“Reincarnation. It means Gisha’s soul is inside my body.”

No, the young Tibetan wasn’t joking. In fact, he was completely serious. Indiana was puzzled. After two minutes of thought, he said:

“But then, you’re not you!”

“Of course I am! I’m still me, it’s just my name that changes.”

“In that case, it could be the same for me. But how would I know if someone else’s soul was in my body?”

“According to my religion, there are many signs,” said Dentsen confidently. “I, for instance, remember people and places I’ve never seen or known before.”

“Extraordinary!” Indy exclaimed. “It’s kind of like never dying.”

“Exactly. We go from one life to another by following the path of Wisdom. At the end of that

path, the true sage eventually reaches nirvana.”

“Nirvana—what’s that?”

“It’s supreme Wisdom. It means the spirit can finally live alone, freed from the body.”

As the two boys talked, heavy black clouds had gathered. Just as Nyak-Tso had predicted, the storm was about to break. The caravan animals sensed it—they were growing more and more nervous.

A first rumble rolled out, followed by a distant clap of thunder. At once, the caravan picked up speed. Nyak-Tso moved back and forth, urging the slower beasts to move faster.

“What’s he saying?” Indiana asked his new friend.

“He’s responsible for our safety, so he’s giving his men orders. We’re going to take shelter in the huts at the pass.”

“But then we won’t reach the monastery tonight?”

“I’m afraid not!”

A lightning bolt slashed across the sky. The wind had suddenly picked up. The gusts swirled, kicking up clouds of dust.

“Hurry up, Indy!”

But instead of hurrying, the boy stopped his mount. The first drops began to fall, as wide as coins.

Indiana pulled up the collar of his jacket and jammed his hat down onto his head.

“What are you doing?” asked the Child Lama again. “Why aren’t you coming?”

“I’m worried about my father! I left him behind, poor guy, on the back of that sorry mule. I wonder where they are now—I can’t see them!”

Indeed, the professor—who was bringing up the rear—was nowhere in sight. And now it was really raining.

“By the devil, what are you fools doing?! In two minutes it’ll be a deluge. You’d better run for it like the rest!”

Fit to be tied, Lieutenant Nyak-Tso had just appeared. He wore a waterproof cape and a kind of fur cap whose flaps over his ears made him look both ridiculous and fierce. In his hand, he held a whip that dragged on the ground.

Dentsen was the one who answered him:

“My friend is waiting for his father.”

“Then let him wait! That’s not my concern.”

“I’m going to stay with him,” the Child Lama said calmly.

“The hell you are!” barked the furious soldier. “I’m responsible for your safety. So, with all due respect, you’re going to take cover.”

As he spoke, he cracked his whip across Dentsen’s horse’s legs. Startled, the animal bolted. The Child Lama barely had time to grab its mane to avoid falling. Clinging tight, he raced toward the nearby pass.

Nyak-Tso let out a wild laugh. He turned to Indiana and sneered in his face:

“Now you’re on your own, young foreigner.”

“I don’t need you, you grumpy old bear!”

“Good thing, because I’m not helping you!”

With that, the lieutenant whipped his horse’s flank. At the same moment, a rumble echoed about sixty feet from Indiana. Sparks and crackling lit up the rocky ridges. It was lightning! The air was thick with electricity. The boy could be struck at any moment.

Indiana scanned the slope once more. Suddenly, Professor Jones’s mule appeared through the curtain of rain. Alone!

Fear gripped Indy. What had happened to his father? Had he fallen? Or had he stopped and let the

frightened animal run off in the storm? If so, had he found shelter?

Now it was a true deluge. Sheets of water poured from the black sky. The wind howled.

More anxious than ever, Indiana spurred his thoroughbred. What would he do if his father were seriously hurt?

Broken Glass Brings Bad Luck!

The storm was now breaking on all sides. A true downpour. The icy water seeped through Indiana's clothes. The path had turned into a rushing stream that swelled before his eyes.

Despite the danger, Indiana urged his mount down the slope. His heart was pounding wildly. Maybe his father had broken a leg or an arm in a bad fall. Or worse still... But that, he didn't dare imagine.

When he reached the spot where he had seen the mule, not far from a massive rock, he shouted loudly:

“Dad! Where are you?”

A roll of thunder answered him, along with a blinding flash of lightning. His horse, startled, reared up.

“Whoa! Easy,” said the boy, tugging on the reins. The animal landed back on its legs and let out a long, nervous whinny. It was urgent to find shelter before it got too spooked.

A deluge of wind and water raged all around Indy. His felt hat, now soaked like a sponge, clung to his forehead. His drenched clothes no longer protected him.

He dismounted and struggled toward the massive rock, through a maze of stones and bushes. Beneath the overhanging wall, he could make out a shelter big enough for a horse and its rider.

Soon, he and his mount would be safe. He picked up his pace. Just five more yards. Through the curtain of rain, he saw a curled-up human figure. No doubt—it was Henry Jones!

After tying his horse to a shrub as a precaution, he rushed forward:

“Dad!”

Sitting on the ground, his head in his hands, the professor looked dazed. He seemed not to understand what was happening. He gave Indy a bewildered look.

“Dad! It’s me, Indiana! What’s going on? Why that look on your face?”

“Huh? What? Where am I?”

“Good grief!” exclaimed the boy, shaking his father by the shoulders. “Don’t tell me you don’t recognize me!”

But that was exactly the case. In the fall, Henry Jones had been knocked out and hadn’t yet come to his senses.

“When’s dinner?” he asked.

Though very worried, Indiana couldn’t help but smile.

“Dinner? It’s not even close to dinnertime yet. Anyway, I think a good shower’s in order before you sit down to eat—you’re covered in mud from head to toe,” he said, helping the injured man to his feet. Limping slightly, the professor took three steps like a sleepwalker. Suddenly, a gust of driving rain whipped under the shelter and lashed his face. He flinched and seemed to come back to himself:

“My God! Where am I? Oh yes, now I remember. The first lightning bolt, the sudden lurch of my mule, my fall into the rhododendrons... My God, I hurt everywhere!”

“You didn’t break anything, I hope,” said Indiana, concerned for his father’s health.



“No, I don’t think so,” replied the archaeologist, feeling his legs, arms, and ribs. “I’m all in one piece, son!” he declared triumphantly.

“Lucky for us,” the boy replied with humor, “it wouldn’t have been easy to find all the pieces. Let alone glue them back together!”

The professor didn’t seem to appreciate being compared to a puzzle in need of assembly. He grimaced. Then a sneer twisted his lips—but for another reason. He had just reached into one of his pockets and pulled out an object he regarded with dismay.

“My glasses! Lord Almighty! They’re in a thousand pieces!”

It was, truly, a catastrophe.

“How will I go on with the trip?” he groaned. “Without my lenses, I can barely see past my own feet.”

“Well, that’s still better than a mole,” joked Indy. “Those poor critters can’t see past the end of their nose.”

“Spare me your remarks!” snapped the scholar, trying to unbend the metal frame.

Only one lens remained attached, and it was shattered.

“Dad, it’s not that bad. You always carry two or three spare pairs.”

“That’s true, you’re right. Except the cursed mule took off with the rest of my luggage!” grumbled the professor.

“Don’t worry,” said Indiana. “We’ll find him as soon as the storm lets up. Actually, it’s already calming down.”

Indeed, the flashes and rumbles were growing farther apart. The sky was still pitch black, but the rain was falling less fiercely.

“Here’s what we’ll do,” decided Indiana. “We’ll wrap ourselves in a blanket and wait for the storm to pass, then we’ll ride out together on my horse.”

“Very well,” agreed the professor, who, like his son, was already shivering. “That’s a wise decision.”

During the half hour they waited, Henry Jones kept grumbling. Finally, judging the time right, Indiana exclaimed:

“It’s barely raining now, but night’s falling. Let’s go before it’s too late!”

Nimble, the boy mounted his horse. He held out a hand to his father and helped him climb up behind.

A biting, freezing wind swept down from the mountain. Snow was beginning to cover their tracks. Progress became difficult. But thanks to Indiana's cool head and skill on horseback, they had no mishaps on the way.

Night was nearly pitch black when they reached the pass. A structure marked the crossing. At first glance, it looked like a heap of stones shaped like a cone. In fact, it was a *stuppa*. Since the beginning of their journey, they had come across several of these structures. Barely six feet high, they housed religious objects. Custom dictated one walk around them clockwise.

Indiana dismounted. All around, the wind howled. But no other sound. No light. No one.

"Where did they go? They could've waited for us!" cried Henry Jones, who, with his broken glasses, couldn't see a thing.

"No need to panic," said Indy. "They can't be far. I know there are shelters—Dentsen told me so."

Leading the horse by the reins, Indiana moved forward cautiously.

"This Nyak-Tso's got it out for us," muttered the

American scholar, shaking his head. “I can’t imagine why. From the start, it’s like he’s trying to get rid of us or something!”

“You’re right,” agreed Indy. “He’s really unpleasant.”

“I can’t wait to get to the monastery. There, at least, we’ll be treated with the respect that—”

“There!” interrupted Indy. “Lights.”

As they approached, the light from a cave entrance grew brighter. It was a fire.

“Great!” cheered Indiana. “We’re going to dry off and warm up.”

“I can already feel the sweet warmth of a nice hot tea! Nothing better for my poor old frozen bones!”

Unfortunately, the dream was short-lived, as two soldiers standing guard stepped into their path to block the entrance.

“What’s the meaning of this? Let us through!!!” shouted Henry Jones.

The two men grew more threatening.

“Easy, foreigner! Stop shouting—you’re disturbing the serenity of this place!”

It was Nyak-Tso. His angular face stood out in the dim light.

“Let us in,” repeated the professor, jumping off the horse.

“Out of the question! This shelter is for Dentsen and his guard. Find yourselves another,” replied the lieutenant with a sly little laugh.

“But it must be freezing out there,” protested the American scholar.

“Nothing’s stopping you from starting a fire!”

“With what, may I ask?”

“Go find something!”

“Criminal!” shouted Henry Jones. “Murderer! I don’t know what’s holding me back. Actually, I don’t feel like holding back at all, you scoundrel!”

Mad with rage, the professor charged straight ahead. Indiana couldn’t believe it! His father—usually so calm, so reserved... It was the first time he’d seen him like this. The first time he’d seen him fight. Unfortunately, it was a one sided battle.

The young adventurer regretted not having a whip handy—one snap and they’d be respected in no time. Seeing his father in trouble, he lunged forward, fists

flying. He knew that against the ten guards now rushing in, they didn't stand a chance.

Still, it was a matter of honor. Head down, the boy aimed for one soldier's stomach. Surprised by the speed of the attack, the man doubled over and took the blow. Already another guard had leapt on the boy, who struggled like a wildcat. But a third soldier jumped in, and faced with these foes, the young American had to yield.

Meanwhile, the professor had also been subdued. Strutting forward with arrogant pride, the lieutenant raised his riding crop.

"Here, foreigners, you do not make the rules!"

"Nor do you, Nyak-Tso!" interrupted Dentsen, who had just arrived. "You're just a soldier assigned to protect me—you obey my orders. Can you explain why you're abusing my friend and his father like this?"

"I... I... " stammered Nyak-Tso, unable to give a reason.

"Release them!" ordered the Child Lama, not giving him time to answer. "And make them a place to sleep near mine, under shelter."

"But that's impossible. I have my orders."

"I give the orders," Dentsen continued firmly.

Without further argument, the lieutenant bowed. He ordered his men to stand down. His eyes met Indiana's, and the boy saw a promise of revenge in them.

Soon after, the boy and his father stood by the fire. Two places had been set aside for them.

"That feels good," sighed Professor Jones, holding in his hands a container full of steaming liquid. "You're sure you don't want some, Junior?"

"Thanks, but no thanks," replied the boy. "Salted butter tea made with yak milk? Just thinking about it turns my stomach. I think I'd rather have milk."

Dentsen, who had overheard, clapped his hands. A servant ran over and the Child Lama spoke to him in his unknown tongue.

Shortly after, the servant returned with a bowl of hot, creamy milk. It had a strong odor.

Truth be told, Indiana didn't like milk. But it was a gift from Dentsen, and he couldn't refuse. Under his father's amused gaze, he took a sip. In the end, it was actually pretty good.

The Guilty Are Innocent!

Thanks to the tea he had drunk and the campfire warming him, Henry Jones had partly recovered his good mood. He gladly accepted the bowl of *tsampa* handed to him. It was a kind of porridge made from barley flour. Mixed with vegetables, it made up a simple evening meal.

Indiana, Dentsen, and the other monks, also sitting around the fire, were eating in silence.

The professor, after gulping down his *tsampa*, seemed absorbed in deep thought. Indiana interrupted his meditation:

“Still, I wonder why Nyak-Tso is acting this

way toward us. We're not bandits!"

"That's exactly what I was just thinking about. And I believe I've found an explanation."

"What is it?"

"Well, you see, Junior, the Tibetans have every reason to be wary. Throughout their history, their country has endured many misfortunes. It was invaded by the Chinese, the Mongols, the English. Even today, Lhasa, the capital, is strictly off-limits to foreigners."

"You're right, Professor," said Dentsen, who, seated to Indiana's right, had been closely following the conversation. "Last year, our Dalai Lama¹ returned to his palace in the Potala. He proclaimed independence and drove out our Chinese enemies. But the situation remains difficult. That surely explains why Lieutenant Nyak-Tso is so aggressive toward you."

"That's no reason to abandon Dad and me in the middle of a storm! I find that unacceptable. If you ask me, that Nyak-Tso was hoping to get rid of us."

¹ Belonging to the Yellow Hat caste, the Dalai Lama, head of the Tibetan Buddhist religion, is also the head of state of Tibet.

“And why is that?” asked the Child Lama, frowning.

“I don’t know. In any case, I’m not going to let it happen!”

At those words, Professor Jones shrugged:

“What are you imagining now, Indiana? Certainly, I don’t find the man very likable, but to think he’s a criminal—or worse!”

“I just don’t trust him, that’s all!”

“You’ve got too much imagination, Junior,” said Professor Jones before letting out a long yawn.

“We’ll see about that!” insisted the boy.

“All right, fine, we’ll see. For now, I’m off to bed! After a day like this, some rest is in order,” declared the professor, stretching. “And I advise you to do the same, Junior.”

“O.K., Prof.!” said the boy mischievously, who had no intention of going to bed that early.

Indiana and Dentsen soon found themselves alone, facing the dancing flames. Indiana was recounting his adventures, the journeys he had made around the world. The Child Lama, curious about everything, never stopped asking questions.

After a long silence, the young Tibetan monk said:

“You’ve seen a lot, but the true journey is inward.”

“Inward? What do you mean by that?”

“Our Buddha said: there’s no need to travel the world to find enlightenment. You only have to search within.”

“I still don’t understand,” Indy replied gravely.

The fire lit Dentsen’s smooth face and prominent cheekbones. His eyes shone. Sitting cross-legged, he spoke calmly. Indiana noticed how he looked both serious and mischievous.

After about ten seconds of reflection, the young Tibetan monk continued his explanation:

“Only the great sages can know enlightenment. They are holy men who have reached nirvana.”

“Nirvana? You already told me what that is, but I didn’t quite get it. You mentioned wisdom...”

“Listen closely. According to our religion, every man is caught in a cycle of existences. Every time he dies, he’s reborn in another body. Sometimes, if he didn’t live well, he comes back as an animal. But it’s



possible to escape this by following the Buddha's teachings."

"That all seems very complicated to me."

Dentsen was about to continue when screams interrupted him. They were coming from the back of the cave where Professor Jones was settled. But what was happening to the American scholar? What had he run into to be shouting like that?

From the shadows burst a wild-haired figure. He looked like a caveman. Yet it was none other than the very respectable Henry Jones.

The two boys exchanged a surprised look and burst out laughing.

"What happened to you, Dad? Why are you dressed like a Neanderthal?"

"You think this is funny, do you?!" grumbled the professor, who couldn't stop scratching. "It's all because of that cursed fur they gave me in exchange for my sleeping bag. It's infested with fleas. They're sucking me dry—it's torture!"

"Poor things!" said Indiana. "With all the bad blood you've got, they're probably getting sick."

“Junior!” roared the American scholar. “I don’t appreciate your humor, and I won’t tolerate your impertinence!”

“Shhh!” whispered Dentsen, placing a finger on his lips. “You’ll wake everyone up!”

Embarrassed, the professor, who was still scratching like an old monkey, stammered:

“You’re right. I’m behaving in a most unworthy way!”

Then he returned to his bedding, mumbling incomprehensible words.

Two minutes later, Dentsen wished his friend good night.

“Good night? I doubt it! If my father keeps squirming around like he is, I’m not going to get a wink of sleep!”

The night was indeed far from restful, and sleep came in short supply. Lying beside his father, who wouldn’t stop tossing and groaning, Indy took a long time to fall asleep. Finally, around three in the morning, exhausted by fatigue, he drifted off.

However, about two hours later, his father woke him up again. He was shouting:

“Let go of me! Let go, I said! What right do you have to treat me like this?”

Indiana poked his head out of his sleeping bag. Caught by two soldiers, his father was flailing like mad. Standing in front of him was Nyak-Tso. And all around, a line of armed men holding torches had surrounded them.

The boy didn't move. He bitterly regretted not having a whip to defend himself. But it wouldn't have helped anyway—there were far too many soldiers.

“What are you accusing me of?” cried Henry Jones.

“Dentsen disappeared during the night. Only his travel chest remains, containing a bit of money and the photo of our Dalai Lama.”

“So what? What does that have to do with me?”

“You're the one who gave information to the kidnappers,” declared the lieutenant, pointing his revolver at the American scholar.

“That's nonsense!” the professor exploded.

“I accuse you of being a spy in the service of the Chinese!”

“What?! choked Henry Jones. Me, a spy? Why not call me a criminal while you're at it!”

The accusation was serious. Indiana's blood boiled. In a flash, he leapt to his feet:

"You're a liar!" he shouted, rushing at Nyak-Tso.

With a simple nod, the lieutenant ordered his men to seize Indy. Two of them moved forward. The boy dove between their legs and slipped through. But the soldiers standing by, caught him before he could escape.

"You bunch of crooks! You've got no right!" yelled the young American, kicking at the guards who were barely able to hold him.

"I'll complain to my embassy! There's no proof for what you're saying!" protested Henry Jones.

"Silence, Tchilinga!" replied Nyak-Tso. "I do have proof! Look at this!"

The officer held up a leather bag. He pulled out a paper and unfolded it.

"My bag!" cried Professor Jones. "How did you get your hands on it?"

"It was on the back of the mule you let escape yesterday. My men found the animal this morning."

“Who gave you permission to rummage through my things?” the professor continued angrily.

“Silence, you evil foreigner! I’m the one asking the questions. Now explain why you’re carrying a document signed by our enemies, the Chinese!”

Boiling with anger, Indiana didn’t give his father a chance to speak. He snapped back:

“That’s easy—we’re heading to China, my father and I. So we exchanged letters with their government to get the necessary permits. That doesn’t make us spies!”

“I don’t believe a word of it! In any case, I’m done talking with you. You’re my prisoners!”

Twisting his scrawny goatee, the lieutenant smiled smugly. Deep in his pupils, a spark of cruelty gleamed.

“Take them away!” he ordered.

“Wait!” shouted the professor. “Fine, I’ll be your prisoner if it pleases you, but at least let me get my glasses from my satchel! I’m so nearsighted I can’t do anything without them!”

The lieutenant seemed to hesitate, then handed the

satchel to Henry Jones, who searched it immediately. Under the soldiers' astonished eyes, he pulled out a pouch. It contained five pairs of glasses, all intact. The professor tried them on one by one and finally chose the gold-rimmed pair. They seemed to suit him best.

"Whew!" he sighed, slipping them onto his nose. "I can see clearly now."

"I can see clearly too," declared the lieutenant triumphantly, waving the Chinese official papers. "You're traitors, responsible for Dentsen's disappearance—you'll be condemned."

At those words, Indiana couldn't hold back. He tried once more to break free from Nyak-Tso's men. But they were far too many, and despite his kicks and punches, they had no trouble restraining him.

"You're as brave as a young rooster, Tchilinga. But a rooster's beak and claws are useless against an old fox like me!" said the lieutenant, his eyes flashing black sparks. Then he turned to the professor:

"Tell your son to calm down, Mr. Jones. I'd rather my men didn't have to hurt him. I'd prefer this

to go peacefully, between reasonable people.”

Inside, the professor was boiling. Yet, with great composure, he said to his son:

“Don’t waste your strength, Junior. This accusation won’t hold up! As soon as we get to the monastery, my old friend Bobkar Rimpotché will step in for us and get us released.”

“If I were you, I wouldn’t be so sure!” sneered Nyak-Tso.

Instead of answering the provocation, the professor shrugged. He tucked his chin into his collar, determined to face whatever came next, calmly.

Indiana, on the other hand, was still seething. He shot the lieutenant a fierce look and said in a sharp tone:

“I don’t know why you’re accusing us, but I’ll find out!”

“You’ll never know anything, young foreigner!” the lieutenant said coldly, signaling to the guards. Roughly, one of them slammed the butt of his rifle into Indiana’s back. Another did the same to the professor.

“You’ll do as you’re told and quietly get back in the saddle,” said the lieutenant. “We’re heading back to the monastery. Don’t try to escape on the way. In these dangerous mountains, you wouldn’t get far!” “And,” he added under his breath, “An accident can happen so easily...”

Indiana thought he sensed a hidden threat in the man’s words. He swore then and there to stay on his guard at all times.

Bad News

Pushed along by two soldiers, Indiana and his father stepped out of the cave. Outside, the monks and the other travelers were already gathered near the horses. When they saw them arrive, they looked away, clearly embarrassed.

After the storm the night before, it had snowed. A white layer, about two inches thick, blanketed the rocky landscape. The cold wind stung their faces and hands.

“Brrrr!” the professor shivered. “We really have no luck. The gods of this land are against us.”

“The gods, I don't know about. But that Nyak-Tso beast is out to get us. I wonder why, but I'll figure it

out eventually! The kidnapping of Dentsen seems very suspicious.”

“I suggest you stay out of it! You're going to get us into trouble—we've got more than enough already!”

“O.K., Prof.!” Indiana snapped back, with a hint of sarcasm.

“Junior! A little respect! I'm your father, don't for—”

The professor was about to launch into one of his usual lectures on respect when he was rudely interrupted by the two guards shoving them forward.

This time, the young American didn't resist. Though truth be told, he was sorely tempted to teach those arrogant goons a lesson.

“I could very easily snatch one of those whips from their belts,” he thought, calculating every move he'd need to make. “Then two or three solid lashes would have them dancing till they begged for mercy.”

But this wasn't the right moment for Indiana to show off his fighting skills. That chance might come soon enough...

Closely shadowed by one of the guards, the boy tightened his straps. He placed his foot in the stirrup and mounted his horse.

Meanwhile, the professor, also under close watch, hadn't stopped grumbling:

"The nightmare continues," he grouched, circling his mule. "My spine's already mush just thinking about planting my rear on the back of that horrid nag again."

Recognizing its rider's voice, the mischievous animal let out a kind of cheerful whinny. It even pulled back its lips into something that resembled a smile.

"Well, at least someone's happy!" Indy said with a grin.

"A real pleasure!" the professor muttered sarcastically

A few minutes later, Nyak-Tso gave the signal to depart. The caravan set off. Indiana and his father brought up the rear, flanked closely by their ever-watchful guards.

The descent from the pass began. At first, the path was fairly wide, but after half an hour, it became much steeper, clinging to the edge of a dizzying gorge.

On his old, limping mule, the professor was uneasy. He moved with extreme caution and with

good reason—beneath his feet stretched an immense slide at least fifteen hundred feet down. There were no guardrails to stop a fall. One wrong step and it would be a deadly drop.

“Junior, wait for me!” Henry Jones shouted to his son, who was about sixty feet ahead, farther down the trail.

Indiana stopped immediately. He whipped his horse around and started back at full speed toward his father. Surprised by the move, his guard thought he was trying to escape. He spun around too, raised his whip, twirled the leather strap, and lashed out violently.

Then everything happened very fast.

The strap wrapped around the front legs of Indiana’s horse. The animal toppled. It tried to get back up but slipped on a large, ice-covered rock, lost its balance, fell sideways, and tumbled straight into the ravine.

“Junior!” Henry Jones screamed, watching his son vanish into the void. “Junioooooor!”

Horried, the professor dismounted his mule as fast as he could and rushed to the edge of the ravine. He saw the horse skidding down the slope. Unless a

miracle happened, the poor beast was going to smash at the bottom.

Below, the monks and the rest of the caravan, drawn by the noise, were watching the scene in terror.

Pale with fear, the professor, seeing no trace of Indiana, cried out:

“Junior? Junior? Answer me!”

A long “Ah!” came back to him. It wasn’t Indy’s voice but the monks’. In their way, they were acknowledging what had just happened. An unexpected thing: just before the precipice, a clump of very sturdy rhododendron bushes—like a net—had caught the horse. It was saved!

But Indiana?

“Junior!” the professor shouted again, his throat tight, on the verge of tears.

“Hi Dad!”

Henry Jones’s heart nearly leapt out of his chest.

“Where are you, Junior? Where are you? Thunder and blazes! Answer me! I’m dying here!!!”

“I’m fine, don’t worry. I’m not hurt. Just a little dazed.”

Waving his hat in the air, the boy had just appeared. He was struggling to pull himself out of a



hole he'd fallen into. It was a rocky crevice filled with fresh snow. Acting like a mattress, it had cushioned Indy's fall. But it had also trapped him inside.

With difficulty, he managed to get out, then started climbing back up the slope.

"Phew!" Henry Jones breathed. "I was scared stiff. I really thought I'd never see you again. You were incredibly lucky."

"Indeed," sneered Nyak-Tso, who had just appeared, "your son is blessed by the gods."

"My son is just very skilled!" the professor shot back, his tone aggressive. Nyak-Tso didn't take kindly to being addressed like that. He retorted:

"Because of his foolishness, he nearly killed one of our best horses! On top of that, he's made us lose precious time!"

"What do you mean, foolishness?" the American scholar roared. "That's ridiculous! It was your man's fault, and you're blaming my son?"

"Silence!" the lieutenant snapped, now red in the face. "I'm sick and tired of your nonsense! I should never have agreed to let you travel with this caravan."

You're the most bothersome Tchilingas I've ever met!"

"And you're the most unpleasant man on earth!"

"GRAHHRR!" growled the lieutenant, storming off without another word.

Indiana had just gotten back to the trail. Already, the soldiers were organizing to retrieve the horse that was stuck. They tied it to the end of a long rope and, with great care, began hoisting it up.

Meanwhile, the monks had begun reciting prayers. One could hear their deep chanting and the clicking of their prayer wheels as they spun them, calling for help from the mountain's protective gods. Sitting on the ground, their eyes half-closed and faces expressionless, they looked like statues.

When the horse was finally pulled up, the caravan resumed its journey. Aside from a few scrapes, the poor beast was barely injured. Indiana was able to mount again.

Early in the afternoon, the monastery finally appeared. It wasn't just a single building, as Indiana had imagined, but a real tiered village. Built on a

wide grassy slope, it was safe from the frequent winter avalanches. Among the stone rooftops gleamed the temples covered in gold.

“Wow!” Indy exclaimed, awestruck. “It’s amazing! Look at those garlands of multicolored flags swaying in the wind.”

“Indiana, come now! Those aren’t garlands. They’re prayer flags.”

“Prayer flags?”

“That’s right. Believers write messages on pieces of cloth. They hang them on lines so the wind can carry them to the gods.”

“I don’t know if it works. But it sure looks beautiful,” the boy remarked.

In the distance rose dark, barren peaks. Higher still, beyond the ridges, loomed an immense snow-capped summit. A magical, majestic landscape.

Religious chants rang out: *Om Padé Om*, along with the sounds of bells and tambourines, and the deep notes of long copper trumpets. The smell of incense mingled with the odor of drying yak dung, used like a sort of charcoal.

A group of monks rushed forward.

“Whew!” said the professor. “We’ll finally get to speak with someone other than that savage Nyak-Tso.”

“You’re right,” Indy replied. “As soon as your old friend, the wise Bobkar Rimpotché, vouches for us, we’ll be free.”

The monks, all very young, gathered around the two foreigners. They chatted with great enthusiasm. Most had never left the monastery or the mountains. It was the first time they’d seen visitors from so far away. They laughed among themselves, pointing at the bearded man who looked like a monkey. Indy’s hat also puzzled them. Compared to their pointy caps, it looked like a flat pancake, which they found very funny.

Henry Jones, who spoke a little Tibetan, tried to talk to them. He said two or three phrases. But instead of replying, the monks burst out laughing.

“What’s so funny?” the scholar huffed. “I’m just asking them to take us to my friend Rimpotché—what’s hilarious about that?”

“I don’t mean to offend you, Dad, but I think you speak Tibetan like a Portuguese cow.”

“What? What?” Henry Jones sputtered. “I don’t

find your humor amusing, Indiana!”

“Don’t get mad, Dad. I just meant your accent is so thick they can’t understand you.”

The professor scratched his beard.

“You’re probably right, son. It’s been ages since I spoke Tibetan.”

Unfortunately, there was no time for language lessons. As Henry Jones tried again to be understood, Nyak-Tso, followed by two guards, cut through the crowd. Pointing at Indy and the professor, he barked an order.

Flanked by two sturdy men, Indiana and his father were led to the quarters of the Grand Lama who ran the monastery. Comfortably settled on cushions, he had a face round as the moon and twinkling eyes that made him seem quite friendly. He let the lieutenant speak without interrupting once. At each sentence, he simply replied with “Hmm,” “Hmm.” When Nyak-Tso finally mentioned the kidnapping of the Child Lama and named the culprits, the Grand Lama stayed silent for a long time.

Unable to take it any longer, Henry Jones stepped forward and protested:

“That’s all lies! We’re not guilty.”

The Grand Lama nodded ever so slightly. Then in a deep voice, he said:

“I’m willing to believe you. But what proves that you are telling the truth? Especially when you seem to be friends with the Chinese—our worst enemies!”

At those words, Indiana leapt toward the Grand Lama. Two soldiers tried to stop him but ended up with only his jacket in their hands. With a wave, the Grand Lama told them to leave the boy alone. Indy removed his hat before launching into his explanation:

“My father is a world-famous scholar. He respects your country. He’s a close friend of Bobkar Rimpotché. The old sage can confirm it.”

With a nod, the Grand Lama signaled he understood and rose. He was barely taller than Indy. He pressed his palms together, gave a slight bow, and said:

“You don’t look like bandits, it’s true. Alas, you’re out of luck. Bobkar Rimpotché died a week ago.”

“What? What did you say?” the professor cried out, devastated.

“I said the old sage Bobkar Rimpotché has left for the great journey to the land of the dead. By now, he should’ve already arrived.”

“Tragedy! What a terrible tragedy!” the scholar repeated, striking his forehead. “I’ll never see my dear friend again!”

But the Grand Lama was no longer listening. A delegation of twenty monks had just arrived. Noisy and energetic, they flooded the room, spinning their prayer wheels. Several brought gifts for the Grand Lama.

Taking advantage of the chaos, Nyak-Tso ordered his men to seize the two Americans. They grabbed the professor, who didn’t resist. Indiana had no intention of going down quietly. He rushed toward one of the exits. Tough luck—Nyak-Tso had thought of everything. Two guards stood watch. Indy turned the other way, barreled through the room, and jostled the monks. One even spun all the way around before falling down. He got back up smiling like nothing had happened.

At the far end of the room, two more soldiers pointed their weapons at Indy. What to do? The boy

knew resistance was useless. He dropped his arms and let himself be captured.

“Not so cocky now, are you?” Nyak-Tso gloated, patting Indy’s cheek with his riding crop.

Indiana glared at the lieutenant.

“Don’t count your chickens before they hatch, Lieutenant! Things can still change.”

“We’ll see about that. In the meantime, my men will take you to your cell. I hope you like it. Maybe not the coziest, but the view is magnificent. Ha! Ha! Ha! You’ll have plenty of time to enjoy it.”

A few minutes later, the professor and his son were roughly thrown into the depths of a cold, dark cell.

Clearly, things couldn’t get much worse.

A Friendly Cellmate

Indiana wasn't the type to let things get him down. The cell door hadn't even fully closed before he was already looking for a way to escape.

He examined the door. Made of thick planks crudely joined together but fastened with large wrought iron nails, it was rock solid. Without tools, there was no way to break it down. Even if they could open it—what good would that do? It led into a corridor, which was itself closed off by iron bars. And behind those bars were guards.

There was only one opening to the outside. A sort of small window that let you watch comings and

goings along the path leading up to the monastery. They'd be able to see travelers arriving, but calling for help was out of the question. They were too far away. And slipping out through that window? Forget it! It was barely four inches wide. Not even a very skinny kid could squeeze through.

The stone walls were at least three feet thick, and the floor was nothing but bare rock. In other words, digging a tunnel was totally hopeless.

"What rotten luck!" cried Indy as he flopped down next to Professor Jones on the only wooden bench in the room. "Unless we can walk through walls, there's no way out of here!"

"You don't need to be an expert to see this place is a real mousetrap! If I ever run into that blasted lieutenant who tossed us in here, I'll chop him into mince meat!" the professor roared, springing up like a jack-in-the-box. Under his son's astonished gaze, he hurled himself at the door and began pounding on it, shouting:

"Open up, blast it all! If you don't let us out, I'll tear down the whole place apart!"

Indiana had rarely seen his father this furious. Normally, he had the reputation of a calm and well-mannered gentleman. None of his friends or colleagues would have recognized him in the raging wild man now bellowing, hair disheveled and beard bristling.

“Dad, no point yelling—no one’s coming. Don’t waste your breath. It’s useless!”

Rather than calming Henry Jones down, Indy’s words only made him angrier. After hammering with his fists, he delivered a savage kick to the door, which earned him a searing pain in his toe. The door, on the other hand, didn’t budge an inch!

“RAAAAAAH!” he bellowed, mad with rage. “You won’t resist me long, you cursed piece of wood!” Blinded by fury, he backed up and charged, shoulder first.

Indiana tried to stop him, but it was too late. The impact made the door shake. A little dust rained down while the professor toppled backward, half knocked out. Indy rushed to his side.

“Are you okay, Dad? Are you alright?”

“Hmmm, I’m okay, I’m okay,” groaned Henry Jones. “Nothing broken. I think I’m all in one piece.”

“So is the door!” quipped Indiana. “But it’s still standing! That’s the difference.”

Stung, the professor refused the hand Indiana offered to help him up. He slowly walked to the back of the room. Instead of sitting on the bench, he headed toward a heap of straw that was barely visible in a dark corner.

“I think I’ll lie down. That may be the best thing to do,” he said, collapsing, discouraged.

That’s when a cry rang out. A human cry. At the same time, a figure appeared in the semi-darkness. So, someone else had been in the cell with them the whole time, and they hadn’t even seen him!

“My God!” exclaimed the professor, scrambling to his feet. “Excuse me! I didn’t know someone was there.”

Though dressed in a simple monk’s robe that left one shoulder bare, the young man who stepped forward didn’t seem to be cold. At first glance, he was slightly older than Indy—sixteen or seventeen. He stood a head taller than the young American but looked less strong and muscular.

“Hello!” he said calmly. “Nice to meet you. My name is Tomo. And you?”

“I’m Indiana. And the guy who mistook you for a couch is my father, Henry Jones, the famous professor.”

“But what were you doing there?” the American scholar asked again.

“I was sleeping,” Tomo replied in English, with a heavy accent.

“Sleeping!” exclaimed Henry Jones, dumbfounded.

“Wow, you sleep like a rock!” said Indiana.

“It’s true,” continued Henry Jones. “A good bed and a heated room are still better than a pile of straw!”

“I don’t worry about those details,” said the young monk offhandedly.

“What do you mean, ‘details’?” the professor shot back. “I don’t agree. Eating well, sleeping well, and being free—that’s of utmost importance for a man who respects himself.”

“That’s your opinion. We Tibetans think differently. Freedom is just an illusion. If you’re not free, you must accept it. Otherwise, you try to become free—and that’s where our misery begins.”

For a moment, the three of them said nothing. Indiana was thinking. The words of this boy, barely

older than himself, might've been full of wisdom. But as for him—Indiana—he'd never accept staying a prisoner!

“So if I understand correctly,” he replied, “when you're in prison, you don't do anything to get free?”

“Oh, I do something. Freedom is in my mind. I escape whenever I want.”

“And when it's cold, do you also find warmth in your mind?”

“That is no problem, for that, there is *numo*.”

“*Numo*? What's that?” asked Indy. “Is it some kind of super-warm clothing?”

A mocking smile appeared on the young monk's lips. But it was Professor Jones who stepped in:

“Junior, really! Don't be ridiculous. The *numo* is the little heater they use around here. It runs on dried yak dung.”

Indiana pinched his nose:

“Ugh! Gross! That can't possibly smell like jasmine!”

The young monk was now laughing heartily, holding his sides.

“I'm sorry, but you're both wrong. *Numo* is neither clothing nor a stove. It's a kind of yoga.”

“Yoga!”

“Exactly! You breathe in a special way to control your body heat. It’s like a form of exercise—we learn it very early on.”

“I don’t believe in that nonsense!” grumbled the professor, annoyed at having been mistaken.

“But it’s true, Mister Jones. I could even show you.”

“Oh really? How?”

“I just need to wrap myself in a damp sheet. With numo, I’ll dry it out in under an hour.”

Henry Jones shrugged.

“I’d like to see that!”

“Come on, Dad, why would this guy be making up stories?”

“Why? Why? How should I know? People in prison aren’t exactly the most honest, are they? Maybe he stole something... or worse!”

“Dad! Let me remind you we’re in prison too, and we haven’t committed any crime!”

“Junior! You always have an answer for everything, and it’s starting to get on my nerves.”

Amused, the young Tibetan monk watched the

father and son arguing. Sitting on the floor, he stayed silent, waiting for the two Americans to quiet down.

“I’m sorry, Mister, but your son is right. I’m not a criminal. I was wrongly accused of a theft. It all comes from Lieutenant Nyak-Tso.”

“What?” cried Indiana.

“That scoundrel again!” exclaimed the professor.

This news made them forget their argument.

“I’m a friend of Dentsen, the Child Lama who’s supposed to stay at the monastery for a few days.”

“We know him,” said Indy. “He was with us in the caravan. But he disappeared.”

“Disappeared?” grimaced Tomo. “What a terrible thing! What happened to him? Tell me everything.”

The three of them were now huddled in the center of the room, which was growing darker as night fell.

“He was kidnapped during the night. But the worst part is that Nyak-Tso accused us of being behind his disappearance.”

At those words, Tomo sank into deep thought. Meanwhile, the professor had clasped his hands behind his back and was pacing in circles like a caged beast.

“That’s still strange,” said the young monk. “I was thrown into this cell on Nyak-Tso’s orders—and so were you. Yet we’ve done nothing wrong.”

“Very strange indeed,” Indiana agreed. “It’s like that lieutenant wants to get rid of us. I think he’s the culprit.”

“Junior!” barked the professor, coming to a sudden halt. “Stop with your wild theories! Sure, the man was unpleasant, but that’s no reason to suspect him. Even if it were true, there’s nothing you could do!”

“I wouldn’t be so sure! The moment I get a chance, I’ll find a way to get to the truth!”

“I forbid you to do anything! Do you hear me, Junior? We’re in enough trouble already. If we ever get out of this cell, we’re leaving immediately. Now that my old friend is dead, I have no reason to stay here.”

“What about your research on the monastery’s treasure?”

“Too bad.”

While Henry Jones resumed pacing the room with long strides, Indiana was nervously tapping his hat. Tomo stood next to the window. He wasn’t listening



to his cellmates' shouting anymore. His mind had drifted off.

But suddenly, he turned and said:

"Shh! Be quiet! Two soldiers are walking by, very close. They seem to be plotting something. I'd really like to know what they're saying."

Tomo was right. Maybe the conversation between those two soldiers would offer something new. All three fell silent. Because of the wind, the voices weren't very clear. But it was possible to make out the main points of the discussion.

Without showing himself, Tomo listened closely. Once the voices had faded completely into the distance, Indiana and his father rushed over to him.

"So? Did you catch anything interesting?"

"Interesting, I'm not sure. But intriguing—definitely."

"Tell us, tell us," said the young American adventurer eagerly.

"First off, they talked about a woman arriving tonight. A European. She's studying our religion. Her name's Alexandra something."

"Alexandra David-Neel?" cried the professor,

suddenly perking up with excitement.

“Yes, that’s it, I think.”

A wide smile revealed the professor’s gleaming white teeth. He nearly leapt for joy.

“What is it, Dad? What’s gotten into you?” Indy asked, surprised by this sudden cheerfulness.

“Well, Junior, I know this adventurer. I met her in France. She’s passionate about Eastern religions. I knew she was traveling in the area, but it’s incredibly lucky she’s coming here.”

“Oh yeah? Why’s that? Does it change anything for us?”

“It changes everything—she could speak up for us and get us out of here.”

“Great,” Indy agreed. “But how will she know we’re locked up in here?”

“Blast! I didn’t think of that,” grumbled the professor, his expression suddenly darkening.

“There might be a way,” Tomo suggested. “I’ll ask the servant who brings our soup to deliver a message.”

“Excellent! Good idea!” Henry Jones exulted, beaming. “See, Junior? There’s always a way out.”

The professor returned to the bench and lay down. Tomo stood at the center of the room while Indiana kept scanning the surroundings.

“Alright,” grumbled the boy. “But I’ll believe it when I see it. We’ll just have to wait for this woman—and hope she actually makes it here, which is far from certain.”

“You’re right, Indiana. The roads aren’t safe.”

“That’s enough,” grunted Henry Jones. “You two are a pair of doubting Thomases! You’ll jinx us—I don’t want to hear any more of it!”

“I’m still going to tell you the rest of what those two soldiers said,” Tomo insisted.

“What else? What did they say?” asked Henry Jones, suddenly very interested, as he sat back down on the edge of the bench.

“I didn’t hear everything clearly, and I’m not sure I got it all right. But I think they mentioned Dentsen—and the caverns of Dawa-Dzon.”

Leaning forward, Henry Jones listened intently to the young monk. Indiana was just as attentive, keeping one eye on the path.

Tomo continued:

“The caverns of Dawa-Dzon are not far from here, on the other side of the Mhal Gorge. That place is off-limits. They say it’s infested with harmful demons. No one dares go there.”

“More legends!”

“That’s what’s passed down in our land, Mister. They are sacred.”

“Maybe so. But a scientific mind like mine can’t accept—”

“Dad,” Indy suddenly cut in. “A group’s coming.”

Professor Jones and Tomo rushed over. The three of them pressed against the tiny window. In the distance, a column was advancing. It had maybe twenty porters on foot or riding mules, and two yaks.

“That must be her. It’s Alexandra!” cried the professor.

But the newcomers were still too far away to be clearly seen.

Old Glasses or a Fine Hat?

It took a good twenty minutes before they could make out the faces of the new arrivals. But even then, they never came close enough for the professor. Nearsighted as he was, and even with his glasses, his poor vision didn't let him see farther than about fifty yards. He strained his neck, widened his eyes—it didn't help a thing.

Thanks to their sharp eyesight, it was Indiana and Tomo who described the scene to him as precisely as possible:

“On one of the yaks, I see a man with a colonial hat. On the other, it must be a woman. But I'm not sure.”

“You’re right, Indiana. It is a woman. She’s wearing traditional clothes and a woolen bonnet. But her face is too pale for a woman from our country.”

“So it’s really Alexandra David-Neel,” declared the professor, rubbing his hands. “Ah! How glad I am! We’ll finally be able to speak with someone sensible.”

From one of his pockets, he pulled a small notebook and quickly scribbled something on one of the pages.

Meanwhile, Indiana kept narrating what was happening outside:

“A group of monks just came out of the monastery to welcome the visitors.”

“Our Grand Lama is among them,” said Tomo. “Usually, he never leaves his quarters.”

“If he came out, it’s surely because he considers the visitor to be someone important.”

The professor tore the page from the notebook and turned to Tomo:

“Tomo?”

“Yes, mister.”

“When the servant brings us our soup, give him this.”

“Alright, mister,” agreed Tomo, as pleasant as ever. “With night falling, he should be here any minute.”

“Do you think you can convince him to deliver our message?” Indiana asked.

“I think so. But we might have to come to an agreement.”

“What do you mean by that?” said Henry Jones brusquely.

“Don’t worry. Nothing serious. It’s just a small thing.”

“What kind of thing?”

“You know, this man who works for the monastery is very poor. He would appreciate a little gift.”

“You mean we’ll have to pay him, is that it?”

“No, it’ll just take... I don’t know. For example, if your son gave him his hat...”

“What!” Indy shouted, spinning around. “Give him my Stetson? No way!”

“Junior! Just this once, be reasonable, will you?”

“Reasonable! Reasonable! That’s not the issue! I refuse to part with my hat!”

“So you’d rather stay a prisoner with your hat than be free without it! Sometimes I don’t understand you, Junior! You’re such a stubborn mule!”

“Maybe I am a stubborn mule! But I care a lot about this Stetson and I’ll never give it up! Why don’t you give him one of your pairs of glasses? You’ve still got four. One more or less won’t make a difference to you. But I’ve only got one hat.”

“What’s that supposed to mean! I might need my glasses! I don’t know what’s stopping me, you impudent brat! You deserve a good spanking.”

A spanking! Professor Jones had never once spanked his son, not even when he was a child. He wasn’t about to start when he was fourteen!

Indiana burst out laughing. The professor roared, “Rrraaah!” Then he fell silent and pricked up his ears again.

The sound of gates opening and closing echoed in the hallway, followed by footsteps.

“Ahem! Ahem!” said Tomo. “I don’t mean to interrupt your... ahem... discussion, but the man with our soup is here.”

“Perfect timing. I’m starving,” said Indy, staring directly into his father’s fuming eyes.

The footsteps came closer. They stopped in front of the door, which opened. A man appeared. He was dressed in rags. With his hunched back, gray hair, and deeply wrinkled face, he looked like a very old man. As he placed the steaming pot of soup in the hallway, he let out a grunt that made no sense at all.

Tomo drew him into the cell and began talking to him. The other man listened, pulling strange faces. He looked at Indiana, then at his father, back and forth. At last, Tomo handed him the message.

The man took the paper in both hands, unfolded it, and pretended to read it. Could he read? Apparently not. In fact, he was holding the paper upside down. He folded it back up and said something to Tomo in what must’ve been Tibetan.

“Well?” said the professor impatiently. “What’s he saying?”

The young monk translated:

“He agrees to deliver your message.”

“Ah, very good! But what does he want in return?”

Hesitating, Tomo cleared his throat:

“Your son’s hat...”

“Ah! You see, Junior!” cut in Henry Jones before the young monk could finish. “Now’s not the time for tantrums—you’re giving up that hat, and I’ll buy you another one!”

Indiana had backed into the far corner of the cell, fully prepared to defend his precious hat.

“Excuse me, mister,” said Tomo in a tiny voice. “You’re mistaken...”

“What do you mean, I’m mistaken?”

“Well... ahem... Your son’s hat doesn’t interest this man. It’s your glasses he wants. You see, his eyesight is very poor and he’s far too poor to afford a pair.”

“What! But without my glasses, I can’t see a thing!” protested the professor. “This is a joke, surely!”

“Not at all! It’s the truth. You must decide quickly, or the guards will come check on us. And then, you risk staying locked up here for a long time.”

The servant stood squarely in front of Professor Jones. He blinked and pulled indescribable faces. But Henry Jones was in no mood to laugh.

“Sure, go on, play the clown, you old fox! Just don’t expect me to clap for you!” he grumbled under his breath.

“Shall I translate that for him, Mister Jones?” asked Tomo, with a sly grin.

“Er... No... I... That wouldn’t be necessary... Alright then, fine. I’ll give him what he wants.”

Reluctantly, Henry Jones handed over his glasses to the man. The man took them delicately, turned them this way and that, examined them from all angles. Then he carefully fitted them on his nose. A wide smile spread across his face.

He took the message again and made another attempt to read it. But he was still holding the paper upside down. Then he did something odd. Instead of keeping the glasses on his eyes, he pushed them up onto his forehead.

“Why is he doing that? Do my glasses not suit him?” asked the professor.

After posing the question to the servant, Tomo translated the reply:

“Oh, they’re perfect. But he doesn’t want to wear out the lenses by looking through them!”

The professor rolled his eyes.

“Good grief! What a ridiculous idea! What on earth is he going to use them for, then?”

“Dad!” cut in Indiana. “That man is free to do whatever he likes. What matters is that he delivers our message, don’t you think?”

“You’re right, son. I do wonder, though, if we can trust him.”

“Don’t worry, mister,” replied Tomo. “This man may seem a bit simple, but he’s very kind. He’ll do what he was asked.”

The man carefully folded the message and tucked it into one of his boots. He gave a smile to the two foreigners and backed out into the hallway. He was about to shut the door behind him when Indiana leapt up and stopped it with the tip of his foot.

“Hey! Not so fast! You forgot our soup!” shouted the boy. “I don’t want to starve to death!”

The man smacked his forehead to show he understood. Through the crack in the door, he handed Indy the pot, the ladle, and three tin bowls he had brought.

As soon as the door was shut again, Indiana lifted the lid from the pot. A puff of steam rose up. The young American plunged the ladle in. A few vegetables were battling it out with tiny scraps of meat. All of it swirled together in a sort of sticky rice

porridge—not very appetizing. The smell, however, was a different story.

Indiana filled a bowl and handed it to Tomo. The monk went off to sit in a corner of the room to eat in peace.

Professor Jones, meanwhile, kept pacing back and forth. He muttered a few terse words:

“...Well... let’s hope... our message... gets us out...”

“Want me to serve you, Dad?” asked Indy.

“Not hungry,” replied the professor, irritated.

“You’re wrong, you should eat something...”

“I’m old enough to know what I need!” snapped the scholar.

“Alright, alright. More for the rest of us, then.”

This porridge had no flavor. At least, nothing close to a grilled steak. But Indy was starving. He downed one bowl, then a second just as fast.

“Ahh! That hit the spot,” he said, wiping his mouth. “Now I could go for a nice hot apple fritter with cream.”

With his belly full, all he had left to do was rest. Besides, night had now fallen. He scattered a bit of

straw on the ground, closed his jacket, and curled up to sleep.

He'd been lying there barely five minutes when shouting echoed from down the corridor. Footsteps approached. No doubt about it—they were about to be freed.

Immediately, Professor Jones dashed to the door. Indiana, half-asleep, sprang up from his bedding.

Tomo, however, was already deep in sleep. He didn't budge an inch.

A heavy key rattled in the lock. The door opened.

It took them ten seconds to adjust to the dazzling torchlight. Several people appeared. A delegation of monks and soldiers, including Lieutenant Nyak-Tso, stood at the cell's entrance. But above all, the Grand Lama himself was there!

He stepped forward and addressed Henry Jones:

"Mr. Jones, I came in person to release you."

"I'm very glad to hear that," replied the American scholar.

"This imprisonment was a regrettable mistake. Our prestigious guest, Alexandra David-Neel, has spoken on your behalf."

“Excellent,” said the professor. “I knew my plan would work. So, you received my message?”

“Your message? What message?” asked the Grand Lama, surprised. “The only message I’ve received is from the bandits who kidnapped Dentsen.”

“What?!” cried Indiana, leaping up. “And what do those scoundrels say?”

“They demand all our gold and precious objects. If we don’t obey, they’ll never return the Child Lama.”

“Ah! So that’s the truth!” Henry Jones declared triumphantly. “Contrary to Nyak-Tso’s accusations, we’re not guilty. Admit it!”

The religious leader looked embarrassed and sheepish.

“I am truly sorry for this regrettable mistake, Professor. In fact, Lieutenant Nyak-Tso himself will now present his apologies.”

The Grand Lama stepped aside to let Nyak-Tso enter the full light.

To say he didn’t look apologetic would be putting it mildly. Chin held high, the soldier stepped forward.



His gaze sparkled with disdain. Arrogantly, he said:

“Given the circumstances, I admit my fault. But know this—I’ll be watching you!”

“Strange way of apologizing,” said Indy sharply. Deep down, the boy deeply doubted the soldier’s sincerity.

Had the Grand Lama read his thoughts? In any case, he said:

“Don’t blame the lieutenant, young man. Our country has just come out of war. His job is difficult, you know. But if I can do anything to help you, just ask.”

Indiana immediately thought of Tomo. Wisely, the young monk had kept quiet during the entire conversation. Grabbing one of the torches, Indiana illuminated him.

“I ask that you free our cellmate,” he said firmly.

At these words, Nyak-Tso leapt up.

“Impossible! That boy is a thief! He deserves his punishment.”

“Not true!” replied Indiana. “You’re the one who threw him in jail to get rid of him. I don’t know why yet, but I’ll find out!”

“Lies!” snapped the soldier.

“Enough!!!” said the Grand Lama, clearly annoyed. Raising his voice, he continued:

“To please my young American guest, let this monk be released!”

Lieutenant Nyak-Tso grimaced. That order irritated him. Furious, he stormed out of the cell.

Soon after, Tomo, Indiana, and Henry Jones, escorted by the monks, left their grim prison.

Meeting with an Adventurer

Outside, it was night. The group walked a while along a path, then plunged into narrow black alleys. At a crossroads, Tomo grabbed Indiana by the sleeve.

“How can I thank you?” he whispered in his new friend’s ear.

“Oh... I have an idea!”

“Oh really! How?”

Indiana pulled the young monk aside.

“Look, I’ve decided to go check out the caves of Dawa-Dzon.”

“What!” cried the young Tibetan. “You must be crazy!”

“Shhh! Don’t speak so loud, someone might hear us.”

With a conspirator’s air, Indiana made sure no prying ears could overhear his words:

“I think Dentsen is being held prisoner there! Unfortunately, I don’t know the way to get there. You’re going to be my guide.”

“What do you mean?!” Tomo choked. “Go with you in the middle of the night to that place crawling with evil spirits!”

“Exactly!”

A grimace distorted the young monk’s face.

“What if the evil spirits attack us?”

“Don’t worry,” Indy replied, “I’ve got a plan for that! The only thing I’m asking from you right now is to get me a whip. A good leather whip, long and sturdy, like the ones yak drivers use.”

“Alright, I’ll find you one. That shouldn’t be hard,” Tomo admitted. “But what are you going to use it for?”

“We’ll talk about that later. For now, let’s catch up to the others. They might wonder what we’re scheming.”

At a quick jog, the two boys soon rejoined the group. All together, they entered the ground floor of a large building. It was where the Grand Lama resided.

Oil lamps cast a dim glow that threw flickering shadows on the whitewashed walls.

Indiana and Tomo brought up the rear. They were about to climb a stone staircase when the young monk stopped:

“Excuse me, Indy. This isn’t my place. I have to go. I’ll find you again later tonight.”

“Alright,” Indy agreed, adding a conspiratorial wink.

It was best not to say more, so as not to arouse suspicion. Besides, Henry Jones was already calling for the boy:

“Junior, what are you doing? We’re expected! Stop dawdling!”

“Alright, alright, Dad, I’m coming.”

He joined his father on the landing, taking the steps four at a time. One behind the other, they entered the immense room where everyone else had already gathered. There, Indiana stopped in his tracks, letting out an admiring “Oh!”

The room was sparsely furnished, but many rugs

and brightly colored fabrics livened up the floor, walls, and ceiling. On a low cabinet stood a golden Buddha. Teapots and silver goblets were arranged on a painted shelf. Other objects, all made of silver, were scattered on the floor: little bells, prayer wheels, Tibetan horns, vases, and bowls.

While the monks sat down on thick cushions, the Grand Lama headed toward a vacant chair at the back of the room. The other one was already occupied.

It was hard to recognize Alexandra David-Neel, the famous French adventuress. But it was indeed her, wearing a traditional cap with pointed earflaps that framed her smooth face. A pin fastened her collar close to her neck. You might almost have mistaken her for any other monk.

Across from her, seated on the floor in a yogi's pose, was a striking figure. Very thin, this bare-chested man kept his eyes closed. He was playing a flute carved from a human tibia. In front of him, spread out on the ground, lay a rosary whose bone beads were shaped like tiny human skulls.

"Ahem! Ahem!" Henry Jones said timidly. The woman lifted her head.

“Forgive me for disturbing you, Madame David-Neel...”

“Professor Jones, come in, come in, you’re most welcome!” cried the Frenchwoman as she stood up.

Encouraged by this warm welcome, Henry Jones stepped forward:

“I must thank you, Madame Neel. Without you, my son and I would still be unjustly imprisoned.”

“In truth, I didn’t do much. It was mostly thanks to the bandits’ message that you were freed. As for me, I merely told the Grand Lama what I know of your reputation. A great scholar like you couldn’t possibly behave like a bandit.”

“Rumors distort many things. I’m only a simple professor, trying my best to do my job well.”

“You’re too modest, Henry. May I call you Henry?”

“Of course,” the scholar agreed, blushing slightly.

“And you’ll call me Alexandra, alright?”

“Agreed, Madame Ne... Uh... Alexandra. I’m very honored. Allow me also to introduce my son, Junior.”

Indiana, who had just joined the professor, protested:

“Dad, I’ve told you a thousand times...”

The professor cut him off with a smile:

“My son insists I call him Indiana. But I just can’t help myself!”

“That’s a nice nickname, though.”

“Oh really, you think so?”

“Of course! Let me share a secret with you: I’m not actually named Alexandra. That’s the nickname I chose for myself.”

“Oh really!” the professor exclaimed.

“Yes indeed. My real name is Louise Eugénie Alexandrine Marie. I was born in Saint-Mandé, near Paris, but I lived in Brussels for a long time. As a young woman, I was bored—I wanted to travel, to see the world. Would you believe I even made a living as an opera singer?”

“You mean to say that you used to sing?”

“Exactly, I was a soprano. Then I met my husband, Philippe Neel. It’s been three years now since I left him. I traveled by boat to India. I still write to him regularly.”

This Alexandra was truly an extraordinary woman! Indiana liked her right away. The boy

stepped forward and, lifting his hat, saluted her like a musketeer.

“You could’ve been an actor!” she said with a smile. It was Henry Jones who replied:

“You’re right—my son has a flair for drama and a vivid imagination. Sometimes it gets him mixed up in rather shady affairs.”

“So you’re a bold young man,” Alexandra said to Indy. But once again, his father beat him to it:

“I’d say he’s more reckless. Like right now—he’s got it in his head he’ll find Dentsen, the Child Lama who was kidnapped. I absolutely forbid him from getting involved!”

Annoyed by his father’s interruptions, Indiana was about to fire back a stinging reply. But just then, two young monks entered, drawing everyone’s attention. They carried trays piled high with food. They placed them on the low table and withdrew.

Immediately, the monks stood up and the room quickly turned into a real banquet hall. Everyone helped themselves with their fingers.

Only the yogi showed no interest in the food.

Indiana, though he’d already had two big bowls of soup, was still hungry. He followed the others’ lead

and helped himself generously from the dishes.

Henry Jones, however, didn't dare touch anything without being invited. Yet his empty stomach tormented him. Alexandra came to his rescue:

"Help yourself, Henry. You must be hungry," she said. "Go on, don't worry—the *momos* are delicious."

"*Momos*? What are those?"

"They're those steamed dumplings, stuffed with meat and vegetables."

"I'll give those a try," the professor said cautiously.

Two minutes later, he was scarfing them down without a care in the world.

It took little more than fifteen minutes for both trays to be emptied. One by one, the full monks took their leave. It was time for bed. Everyone headed off to their sleeping quarters.

Soon, only Indiana, Henry Jones, the Grand Lama, the yogi, and Alexandra were left in the room. Alexandra picked up the conversation again:

"This kidnapping business is such a shame. I was hoping to meet the Child Lama, Dentsen—I'm very disappointed."

“And I,” said the Grand Lama, “am deeply worried. Even if I offer all the monastery’s treasures in exchange for his release, there’s no guarantee the bandits will keep their word.”

He turned to Henry Jones.

“Dear professor, you mentioned earlier that your son wanted to search for Dentsen. Where does he think he’ll find him?”

The American scholar was about to reply, but Indy spoke up:

“I think he’s in the caves of Dawa-Dzon,” the boy announced, stepping into the center of the room.

At that very moment, Lieutenant Nyak-Tso entered the room.

“What nonsense!” the officer immediately snapped, squaring up to Indiana. “It’s been a long time since I heard such idiocy!”

“It’s not idiocy—it’s a suspicion.”

The Grand Lama stood up and moved beside Indiana:

“Do you know the reputation of that dangerous place, my boy? Do you know that truly evil spirits dwell there, no one who’s ever dared to go has come back?”

“I know. But I’m convinced those spirits aren’t

real—they're just bandits using fear to control the place."

"What? What are you making up now?" Nyak-Tso bellowed. "You're just a foolish youth and a nonbeliever!"

"And you're a coward! If you had any courage, you'd go right now to see if what I'm saying is true! Just take all your men. But you'll never do it. Do you know why, Lieutenant? Because you're the leader of the bandits who kidnapped Dentsen!"

At those words, the officer turned pale. He pulled his crop from his belt and raised it above Indy's head:

"You've crossed the line, you insolent brat. I don't know what's stopping me from giving you a sound thrashing."

"Hold it right there!" the professor stepped in. "You're not going to hit my son!"

Henry Jones had grabbed the lieutenant's wrist and held it in mid-air. He was a full head taller than the officer, but unaccustomed to fighting, he didn't gain the upper hand. The odd pair crossed the room in what looked like a kind of Argentine tango. They growled

unintelligible insults. Alarmed, the Grand Lama tried

to intervene:

“Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Calm yourselves. Please—no violence!”

Fuming with rage, the two men kept struggling.

Helpless, the Grand Lama, Alexandra, and the yogi watched the scene in dismay.

Sensing that things might end badly for his father, Indiana had an idea.

He dashed over to the yogi, still seated on his mat. He snatched the flute from him, grabbed a tambourine, and wrapped himself in one of the wall hangings. Disguised like this, he launched into a dance that was half Egyptian belly dance, half Native American war dance.

The effect was immediate. Alexandra was the first to burst out laughing. The Grand Lama soon joined her. Even the solemn yogi couldn't suppress a chuckle.

Faced with the uproarious laughter, Henry Jones and Nyak-Tso suddenly realized how absurd the whole thing was. They froze, glaring at each other.

The Grand Lama took the opportunity to declare with a smile:

“Gentlemen, the party's over. Everyone let go of their dance partner—it's time for bed, I believe.”



“You’ll pay for this insult,” Nyak-Tso growled as he backed away.

“We’ll see about that!” Indiana shot back. “And I do hope you don’t have a good night!”

The lieutenant slammed the door behind him as he left.

All that was left was for each of them to head to their bedroom.

A Frightening Disguise

After saying good night to Alexandra and the Grand Lama, Indiana and his father followed a servant who led them to their room. They climbed stairs, went down corridors, turned right, then left, and went back down. A true maze.

Throughout the walk, the professor showered Indiana with scolding:

“Really, Junior, you shame me! With those faces you were making, you looked like a proper clown!”

“That’s perfect—once we’re home, I was planning on joining the circus.”

“Nonsense!” the professor snapped. “Because of

you, I behaved ridiculously. That was the last time, you hear me! Starting tonight, you're going to abandon these harebrained schemes of yours. You are absolutely not to play the hero again! Did I make myself clear? Tomorrow, I begin my work, and you'll help me so we can leave this unwelcoming place as soon as possible."

Indiana was not pleased by his father's decision. He had no intention whatsoever of staying in some dark room studying old, dusty manuscripts. But he kept that to himself. Instead, he sank into deep silence. It was the only way to get the professor to calm down. If he'd answered back, Henry Jones would've gotten even more upset.

At last, they reached their room.

Actually, it wasn't a room, but a dormitory. A chorus of snoring greeted them.

"My god! What is all this racket! And it reeks of ferret too," cried Professor Jones, holding his nose.

"You're right," Indy agreed. "Our monks must not wash very often. Makes sense—they've got no bathroom and no running water."

“Good grief! Then that means I won’t be able to take a shower! A good scrub would’ve done me wonders—I feel as filthy as an anteater!”

“Oh yeah? Anteaters are filthy? I didn’t know that.”

“Well I do know, and that’s enough for me!”

Clearly, the professor wasn’t in the mood for his son’s humor. Indiana fell silent again.

By the light of a candle, the servant led them through the dormitory. At the far end, he stopped in front of the only two remaining beds. They were bunk beds. In the ones next to them, two monks were sleeping.

“Blast!” Indy immediately thought. “How’s Tomo going to find my bed in this dorm? I need to make myself stand out. Oh, right! I’ll leave my hat out where he can see it.”

“What are you thinking about? I’ve asked you twice and you haven’t answered.”

“Uh...!” stammered the young American, caught red-handed. “I wasn’t thinking. I was falling asleep.”

“Good! At least while you’re asleep, you won’t get into any mischief. So, which do you want—top or bottom?”

“Bottom,” said Indiana. He figured, quite reasonably, it’d be easier to slip out quietly when Tomo came to wake him.

“That’s odd,” the professor remarked. “You usually always want the top.”

“Not today. I think I’ve come down with a case of vertigo.”

“Vertigo? Now that’s news to me! Since when do you have vertigo?”

“Since just now,” replied the boy with a jaw-cracking yawn.

The professor had already taken off his shoes. He removed his pants, took off his jacket, and folded everything very neatly. He was down to his underwear and undershirt while Indiana hadn’t even begun undressing.

“Aren’t you going to get ready for bed, Junior?”

“Oh, no, I’m too lazy,” answered Indy, sliding fully dressed under the blankets.

The professor wrinkled his nose.

“Phew! That’s against every hygiene rule there is. You could at least take off your boots!”

“Shh!” whispered a voice.

The professor realized he’d just woken someone. He didn’t insist. He finished getting ready for bed by

plugging his ears with wax earplugs he bought specially at a drugstore on 5th Avenue in New York.

Indiana seemed asleep already. But in reality, the boy was on alert. Out of the corner of his eye, he watched his father. The professor raised one leg to climb into his bed. But he wasn't quite flexible enough to pull it off. He tried again, and this time, managed to hoist himself up with great effort.

"Poor Dad, he's no better at climbing onto a tall bed than onto the back of a mule," thought the boy, amused.

Indiana still felt the movements of his father slipping under the covers. The bed creaked, the slats groaned. At last, Henry Jones blew out his candle.

Barely five minutes after darkness fell, a loud snore echoed through the room.

What could that be? Indiana understood quickly: it was his father, Professor Jones, snoring like an old boiler!

"Perfect," thought Indy. "He's so tired he's out cold. He won't hear Tomo when he comes to get me."

All the young American had to do now was wait patiently for the arrival of his new adventure buddy. Lying in bed, warm and comfy, he struggled to stay awake. The last few days had been tough, and even he, trained as he was, felt deep fatigue in all his muscles.

He felt sleep coming on. But he bit the tip of his tongue to stay awake. It was a technique he'd picked up in a scout manual. Sometimes it worked—if you bit hard enough!

He must not have bitten hard enough, because in the end, he fell asleep and he slept like a rock.

Suddenly, he started. Someone was shaking him. He opened his eyes. A distorted, grimacing face was looming over him. Nyak-Tso! It was Nyak-Tso. The lieutenant was going to strangle him. Indy couldn't hold back a cry. He bolted upright.

“Hey, easy!” whispered a familiar voice. “You'll wake up the whole dorm.”

“Oh! It's you,” sighed the boy, relieved to recognize Tomo. “I thought you were Nyak-Tso. I thought he was going to kill me. What a nightmare!”

“Shh!” said Tomo. “Here’s the whip I promised you.”

Indy grabbed the item and unrolled it. It was made of several braided strips and measured at least ten feet. The handle fit perfectly in his hand.

“Perfect,” he whispered, pleased. “It’s exactly what I needed.”

A satisfied smile lit Tomo’s face.

“I borrowed it, so we’ll have to return it...”

“Of course,” murmured Indiana, who as usual wrapped the thong around his belt. That way, he could use it easily whenever needed.

“Now, let’s not linger here! Better to step out of this room to talk.”

Before leaving, Indy stuffed his pillow under the blankets and placed his hat where his head had been. That way, thanks to the darkness, it would look like he was still in bed.

After that precaution, the two boys tiptoed across the room. None of the monks woke up. Except for a couple of nightlights, all the lights were off. The monastery slept deeply. After weaving through more

corridors and staircases, they finally made it outside. The cold nipped their cheeks and noses. The moon, just cresting over the peaks, lit things up like daylight.

“All clear,” said Tomo after surveying the area. “Better this way. I’d hate to have to explain what I’m doing here. Normally, the rules of life are very strict, and we have to try hard to follow them closely.”

“Maybe you’re bending the rules, but don’t forget, it’s for a good cause. We’re going to find your best friend, Dentsen.”

“You’re right—and yet I still tremble just thinking about the evil spirits in the caves. What will we do if they attack us?”

“First, I’m sure those spirits don’t exist. They’re just made-up stories. Second, I’ve got a plan: we’re going to wear disguises to scare the bandits.”

“Disguises! Of what?”

“Back home, we dress up for Halloween, the Day of the Dead. The costume’s simple, but really scary. Take me to one of the monastery’s storerooms—I’ll definitely find what I need there.”

Tomo was quite uneasy. This boy was asking him

to do forbidden things. He didn't like it. What would people say if he was caught in the pantry? He'd surely be kicked out of the monastery. Indiana saw his hesitation:

"Trust me, Tomo. If there's any trouble, say I'm the one responsible and that I threatened you."

"Oh no way!" exclaimed Tomo with pride. "I won't be called a liar on top of a thief!"

They had arrived at a wooden door. Tomo glanced left and right. No one. He pushed the door open and signaled for Indiana to follow.

A thousand smells hit their noses: spices, dried fruit, salted meat... It was all within anyone's reach, as if thieves didn't exist.

Tomo grabbed a torch that hung from a hook by the door. Indiana lit it with a match from the pack he always kept in his pocket. The light filled the room.

There was enough food to feed an entire regiment for months. But there were also tools, utensils, and equipment.

"Fantastic! I'm bound to find what I need," said Indy cheerfully, heading toward some baskets of

vegetables and fresh fruit. “Let’s see what’s in here.”

He lifted the lid of a large wicker basket.

“Exactly what I’m looking for!” he cried, showing Tomo a kind of melon, as big as a pumpkin. “With this, I’m going to make the ugliest Halloween mask ever seen!”

“How’s that?”

“Easy. I’ll show you.”

Indiana pulled his knife from his pocket. It was a twelve-blade Swiss Army knife. Tomo had never seen anything so fancy. He let out an admiring “Oh!”

“Look,” Indy went on. “First I cut a hole in the base of the fruit. Then I hollow out the flesh and the seeds.”

To do this, Indiana used the spoon-shaped blade. Instead of throwing it away, the two boys ate the sweet flesh.

“Mmm! That’s good, right?”

“You’re right, Indy. I’ve never eaten anything so sweet and fresh. Only now I think I’m going to get punished. That fruit was probably meant for our Grand Lama and his guest, Alexandra. It’s going to be a scandal when they see it’s been eaten.”

“Don’t worry! Tomorrow, we’ll have rescued Dentsen. No one will think to blame us for eating a melon!”

“I sure hope you’re right,” said Tomo, resigned.

They had now eaten all the flesh. Only the rind remained. Carefully, Indiana carved out two eyes, a nose, and a mouth with just a tooth or two.

“There! It’s done!” he exclaimed, slipping his head into the hollow melon. “What do you think—don’t I look sinister?”

“It’s scary enough. But I don’t think it’ll be enough to scare off evil spirits.”

“Wait! We still need a few more things to make it really convincing. Let’s see. What can we find?”

Torch in hand, Indy moved among shelves, crates, sacks, and barrels. Tomo followed close behind.

“Take these white sheets. They’ll work if we cut a hole for the head to go through.”

“Oh my god,” groaned Tomo. “Those are the sheets the Grand Lama uses, and only him.”

“Too bad, he’ll have to sleep without them. We’ll return them afterward.”

“But what if they’re torn?”

“Then we’ll make dish rags out of them!” Indy joked. But Tomo didn’t seem amused.

“Candles—excellent!”

“You don’t think that’s enough?” asked Tomo, wringing his hands.

“Hold on, I’m still looking.”

Tomo was beginning to regret getting into this. When people found out the pantry had been raided, it would be a huge scandal. He didn’t even want to imagine it. A shout from Indiana chased away his gloomy thoughts.

“Wow! Exactly what I need,” triumphed the boy, who had just found a skull with horns. “I’ll stick this on top of my Halloween mask—perfect!”

Wrapped in a sheet, with the skull-topped mask on his head, Indiana was unrecognizable.

“Put out the torch!” ordered Indy. “I still need to run a test.”

Tomo extinguished it. Just then, the entrance door creaked open. A human figure, lit by the faint glow of a candle, slipped in furtively.

The two boys crouched down. Tomo’s heart was

pounding. He was imagining the worst. And the worst was about to happen. But it wasn't what he expected.

The figure moved forward. It stopped near the fruit baskets. It was just a late-night snacker coming in for a bite.

"Perfect," whispered Indy in Tomo's ear. "Let's see if my disguise works."

In a flash, the boy stood up. He let out the loudest, scariest scream he could muster and lit the torch with a match. The effect was even more dramatic than expected. The monk, horrified by the monstrous apparition, let out a blood-curdling howl.

"Shenji!!! Shenji!!! Aaaaaah!!!"

He tried to flee, but a crate in his path made him fall headfirst. As he fell, he knocked over a jar that shattered, spilling grease. The floor instantly turned into a skating rink!

With the torch as close to his face as possible, Indy advanced, growling incoherent noises.

Even more terrified, the monk tried to get up. He wobbled, knocked over pottery that shattered, grabbed a shelf that toppled, spilling its contents across the floor.



At last, the poor victim managed to reach the exit. Half the pantry now looked like a battlefield.

“What a disaster!” moaned Tomo. “What a disaster!”

“A disaster? Are you kidding? I think it’s a total success. Did you see how scared he got?”

“That’s true. The poor monk thought he saw Shenji, the god of death!”

“Proof that my disguise is perfect,” said Indiana, removing his mask.

He slipped the whole get-up into a canvas bag and slung it over his shoulder.

“Now, off to the caverns of Dawa-Dzon! The evil spirits better watch out!”

Caverns and Taverns— Don't Mix Them Up!

Tomo was walking ahead. The young monk had been born in these mountains; he knew them well. For about an hour, they climbed the trail toward the pass where Indiana and his father had slept the night before. The snow had melted during the afternoon, and only a few patches of it remained.

Halfway up, Tomo veered to the left. The new path, much narrower than the previous one, wouldn't have been passable by mules—much less by yaks. It sloped sharply downward in tight switchbacks.

Tomo stopped on a promontory. From there, they

could see the wide panorama bathed in moonlight. A very high mountain stood out on the horizon. The white mass of a glacier flowed down from its summit. Just beyond, a deep ravine opened up.

“The caves of Dawa-Dzon are just opposite, on the far side of that gorge.”

“They look really close,” said Indy. “We’ll be there in barely half an hour.”

“Don’t be fooled! It only seems that way. It’ll take us at least twice that to get there.”

“In that case, let’s get a move on!”

They set off at a brisk pace.

Indiana had taken the lead. The descent was much longer than expected. It began with a rocky switchback, unstable and treacherous for the ankles. Fortunately, cairns marked the way.

After about ten minutes, Indiana reached an area covered in low vegetation. The trail became easier to follow. The boy stopped to wait for his companion, who had fallen behind.

“Hurry up, Tomo! This is no time to dawdle!”

“Sorry, but it’s because of my shoes,” grumbled the young monk, pointing to his worn-out boots. “They’re in such bad shape that I have to be careful not to twist my ankles.”

“Sorry,” Indy murmured. “You’re right—good shoes are essential on terrain like this.”

Just as they were about to start walking again, stones rolled from above them. Indiana turned quickly and scanned the slope. In the clear night, he thought he saw a shadow slip away.

“Dang it! We’re being followed!”

“You think so?”

“I’m not sure. But we’d better stay alert—you never know.”

For the next ten minutes, Indiana kept glancing back. His sixth sense, honed by all the adventures he’d lived through, remained on high alert. It was warning him of danger. But what kind?

Once, he thought he glimpsed a figure among the many scattered boulders dotting the slope. He raised his arm and shouted to warn Tomo.

“Look—up there!”

The young Tibetan turned around.

“You didn’t see anything?” Indy asked him.

“No, nothing.”

“Okay then. Must be fatigue. I’m seeing things,” Indiana concluded.

“Or it’s the great snow monkey,” Tomo joked.

“The great snow monkey?”

“They say it’s a demon from hell. It lives somewhere in the snowy peaks. No human’s ever managed to catch it.”

Indiana burst out laughing.

“What a joker you are! You mean the Abominable Snowman? We call it the Yeti. But it’s just a legend.”

“You shouldn’t laugh, Indy,” replied Tomo, adjusting his shoulder strap that was beginning to dig into his shoulder. “There’s always a grain of truth in legends.”

“I’d rather laugh—it helps me relax,” the young American shot back, suddenly serious. “But if you’d rather believe in it, that’s your call.”

There were still ten more minutes of descending through rhododendrons and ferns. Indiana got there first. In front of him yawned a black chasm. The roar of the invisible torrent below now reached him.

“Not exactly comforting,” the boy thought,

approaching the edge of an impassable cliff. It dropped straight down about 300 feet. At the bottom, he could barely make out the wide, raging stream. The darkness only heightened the feeling of emptiness. The rope bridge to the other side was made of three cables. To cross, you had to step on the lowest one while gripping the other two.

“Sheesh!” muttered Indy. “I didn’t plan on becoming a tightrope walker!”

“What’s that?” asked Tomo, who had just caught up. “Speak up—I can’t hear over the torrent!”

Indiana decided not to repeat what he’d just said. Pride kept him from showing fear. He stammered:

“I was wondering... uh... this bridge... um... well, was it built by men, or by the Devil himself?”

“By men, of course!”

“Oh really! Well then, I suppose we can trust it!”

Without further delay, they stepped onto it one after the other. Just a few feet in, the void was already terrifying. Apart from those cables, there was nothing separating them from the thundering waters below. In the gloom, they moved forward in cautious little steps.

“Not exactly the place to dance the polka!” thought Indy, holding his breath. Neither of them spoke. Not that it mattered—the roar of the water would have drowned out their voices.

Halfway across, the cables started to sway under their weight. Indiana felt his stomach twist. Despite the cold, sweat was dripping down his forehead.

“My God, I’d give anything to be at my favorite pastry shop eating a good sundae with fruit, chocolate chips, and a mountain of whipped cream.”

At the thought, he relaxed. For the rest of the crossing, he kept picturing his favorite dessert. It was the best way not to panic.

Finally, they reached the other side.

“Just think—we’ll have to come back across that!” Indy sighed.

“I’d rather not think about it!” added the young monk, wiping the sweat off his forehead.

“Are you sure there’s no other way across?” Indiana asked, just in case.

“Nope, none. Or else we’d have to take a huge detour across the glacier.”

“Too bad,” said Indiana. “But never mind that now—we still have to find Dentsen.”

Thirty minutes later, they reached the outskirts of the caves. The closer they got, the less at ease Tomo seemed. Suddenly, he stopped.

“Listen!” he said, grabbing Indiana by the sleeve. “Do you hear those cries?”

Indiana perked up his ears.

“Oh no!” the young Tibetan cried with a grimace. “It’s evil spirits! They know we’re entering their territory. They’re going to attack us—I can feel it!”

“Calm down! I’m telling you, those aren’t spirits. They’re human voices.”

“You sure?”

“No doubt about it!”

“I wish I could be sure.”

“There’s only one way to know. You’ll have to come with me to the caves. So, are you coming, or do I have to go alone?”

Tomo thought for a few seconds, then made up his mind:

“I’m no coward—I’m coming. You’ll need me to free Dentsen. And if the evil spirits show up, they’ll

have someone to deal with!”

“Great!” cried Indy, patting Tomo on the back. “Your friend Dentsen’s going to be real proud of you!”

Sneaking between boulders and bushes, they got within thirty yards of the caves. There were about ten excavations dug into a cliffside. Hidden behind a rock, they carefully observed the area.

“Looks like abandoned mines,” Indiana thought. “Anyway, this cliff’s like a block of Swiss cheese.”

Now the voices Tomo had mistaken for spirits were clearer. They were coming from one of the caves. Like the one next to it, this cave had a wall built over the opening with a door installed in it. It was the only one lit up.

“So,” whispered Indiana. “What do you think?”

“You were right—men of flesh and blood.”

“Rowdy thugs, more like! From the way they’re shouting, they’ve been drinking more than just water!”

Indeed, the bandits were living it up. Yelling gave way to singing. They were so confident, they hadn’t even posted a guard.

“They’re celebrating their win too early,” Indy whispered to Tomo. “They ought to know better than to count their chickens before they hatch!”

“How many do you think there are?”

“Not many, I’d say. Maybe three or four.”

“Watch out,” Tomo whispered. “The door’s opening!”

The two boys fell silent and flattened themselves against the rock that shielded them. A man appeared, holding a torch in one hand and a bottle in the other. Another followed him out, shouting.

“They’re speaking a language I don’t know,” Tomo whispered.

“Their clothes are weird—half military, half civilian, and pretty tattered. Probably deserters from the Chinese army.”

“Well, their outfits didn’t come from a dry cleaner. And let’s not even mention a barber!”

“You’re right—I’ve never seen hair and beards that wild.”

“Real lice hotels!”

“Shut up! Just talking about it makes me itch!”

The two men staggered forward a few steps. Clearly, the already had more than enough to drink. The one with the bottle brought it to his lips, and the other jumped on him to grab it. He was pushed back and fell on his backside, got up with difficulty, and lunged again.

The other kept drinking. This time, the bottle slipped away. A fight broke out and the two started rolling on the ground, screaming.

A third crook appeared in the doorway. He was a giant. He seemed just as drunk as the others and was laughing so hard he could barely stand.

“What a disgraceful scene!”

“Yeah, but it works in our favor,” corrected Indy. “With all that booze in their blood, these drunks won’t even know what hit them. I doubt they can even fight.”

It was time to act. Indiana opened his bag, pulled out his precious disguise, and slipped it on quickly. Without waiting, he charged at the bandits, yelling his lungs out.

Tomo, simply wrapped in a sheet that made him look like a ghost, followed close behind. In Tibetan, he shouted:

“Oh! Oh! We are the demons, messengers of Shenji, god of death! Flee or we’ll drag you to Hell with us!”

Startled, the two filthy scoundrels stopped fighting at once. They scrambled to their feet, helping each other up. Indiana ran straight at them.

Faced with this horned creature charging full-speed, the two thugs saw no option but to run. They dashed back into the cave, where the third man had already vanished. Maybe he’d drunk less than the others? Either way, he still had some wits left. He reappeared in the doorway holding a long, sword-like weapon.

“Yikes!” muttered Indiana, grabbing the whip handle coiled around his waist. “This is getting tricky.”

Like a bear at the mouth of his den, the bandit looked ready to stand his ground. Indy raised his whip. At that moment, Tomo cried out. The young monk had stepped on a corner of the sheet that served as his disguise and fell. The cloth tore, revealing his head.

“Darn it!” thought Indy. “We’ve been exposed!”

Realizing who he was facing, the man grew bolder. But Indiana didn't give him time to recover. Raising his whip, he cracked it again and again. The strap snapped like a machine gun. Each blow hit him in a tender spot, making him scream. He backed into the cave, shielding himself as best he could.

Meanwhile, Tomo had gotten back up. He ran to the cave door, slammed it shut, and slid the bolt on the outside.

"Nice work!" shouted Indy, running to join Tomo. "Those three bandits are trapped in their rat hole!"

"Yeah," the young monk replied. "But I'm afraid the lock won't hold them."

Indeed, the three lowlifes were coming to their senses. Already they were trying to break down the door, which shook with each blow. Indiana made a snap decision:

"We'll block this cursed door with stones. It might not hold forever, but it'll buy us time to escape."

No sooner said than done. Rolling over the heaviest rocks they could find, the two boys quickly

finished their task. Behind the shuddering door, the bandits howled in rage.

After shedding their costumes, Indiana and Tomo sat down to rest. After all that effort and excitement, they badly needed a break.

Suddenly, Indiana smacked his forehead and shouted:

“Dentsen! Oh no, what an idiot I am!”

“What do you mean?”

“Think, will you! We locked the bandits in—but they probably have the Child Lama with them!”

“You’re right. We have to do it all over again!”

“And now we’ve lost the element of surprise. What a disaster! I can’t believe I was so stupid!”

Indiana was in a dark mood. He paced around, kicking rocks and snapping his whip just to blow off steam.

He collapsed onto a stone.

“We have to think. There must be another way!”

“Listen!” said Tomo suddenly, perking up.

“What now?” Indy snapped. “You hearing spirits again?”

“No! It’s a distant voice.”

The young monk stood and started walking. Indiana followed closely. They moved toward the door of the second cave.

“You’re right!” Indiana exclaimed. “There’s someone in there!”

Once the door was open, Tomo called out in his language. From the depths of the darkness, a voice answered in Tibetan.

Indiana recognized Dentsen.

Suspense on the Suspension Bridge

Tightly bound at the bottom of the cavern, the Child Lama welcomed them with a broad smile. Despite the unpleasant hours he had just spent in that dark and cold hollow, he seemed very calm.

“Everything all right?” Indiana asked, worried, as he cut the ties that held Dentsen.

“Perfectly! Everything is always all right for those who keep faith in their karma. I was sure someone would come free me, I didn’t panic.”

The young Tibetan stood up. While rubbing his sore wrists, he leaned slightly forward and made a sort of bow.

“Thank you, you American who came from the other side of the world. A thousand thanks. Because I am a stranger to you, and yet you didn’t hesitate to risk your life to find me.”

Indiana felt very proud of those words.

“I’m very honored,” he replied, puffing his chest out slightly. “But I didn’t do anything extraordinary. I just don’t like injustice.”

Dentsen then turned to Tomo. The two young monks fell into each other’s arms and embraced.

“Tomo, you really are my best friend. I knew I could count on you.”

But this was neither the time nor place for long embraces.

“Let’s not dawdle!” said Indiana as he headed toward the cave’s exit. The two young Tibetans followed close behind.

Outside, they were met by the shouts and blows of the bandits trying to break down the door of their prison. Already, one plank had given way.

“The faster we get out of here, the better. I won’t feel safe until we’re far away from those thugs!” said Indiana.

Dentsen nodded in agreement, then replied:

“By the way, how did you get rid of the

odious Nyak-Tso? That couldn't have been easy! That military man is a traitor. He's the leader of that gang of bandits. That's why he accused you. He thought no one would ever uncover his misdeed."

"My God!" cried Indiana. "I'd forgotten all about him. In my humble opinion, he must be lurking around somewhere. I wouldn't be surprised if he's planning something nasty for us."

"Then let's go!"

Already, the horizon was beginning to lighten. In about an hour, day would break.

The three friends were making their way back along the path toward the monastery. First they had to descend into the gorge, cross the suspension bridge, then climb back up the other side.

A good hour's walk.

To protect Dentsen, Indy had decided that Tomo would walk in front, while he stayed in the rear. With his whip ready in hand, he would be prepared to act if they were attacked.

The journey to the suspension bridge went without incident. Yet the atmosphere was heavy. Nature was awakening in the pinkish dawn. Invisible animals ran every which way. The shadows grew.

As they neared the torrent, Indiana, increasingly tense, felt a vague and inexplicable threat.

“No sign of that blasted Nyak-Tso—I don’t like this,” he muttered, scanning the surroundings. “Still, I’d be very surprised if that lieutenant isn’t lying in wait somewhere!”

At last, they reached the bridge. They stopped before crossing.

“Tomo, you’ll go first. Once you’re across, you’ll make sure there’s nothing strange. Then you’ll give us the signal by raising your arms. Dentsen can cross after that.”

“What will you do in the meantime?” asked the Child Lama.

“I’ll stay here to keep watch. If Nyak-Tso or his cronies are foolish enough to show their faces, I’ll give them a taste of my whip! And it stings something fierce!”

The boy had found a way to joke. But his heart wasn’t in it. His gut told him something was going to happen. Something serious. And his gut never lied.

Tomo crossed without trouble. Once on the far side, he looked around, then, as agreed, raised his arms toward the sky.

“All clear, the coast is clear. Your turn to cross,” Indy said to Dentsen.

Without a moment’s hesitation, Dentsen stepped onto the rope bridge. Not the least bit fazed, he seemed absolutely confident. In fact, he walked that tightrope like a seasoned acrobat. Soon, he reached the middle. There were about 150 feet of emptiness below him. That’s when Indiana noticed Tomo still had his arms raised. He could have lowered them after signaling.

“That’s strange,” Indiana thought. He cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted as loud as he could, “Dentsen, watch out!”

But the roar of the torrent was too loud for the Child Lama to hear. Indiana’s only option was to try to catch up to him. Unfortunately, running on that unstable thing was near impossible. Indiana couldn’t catch up to Dentsen. He was still halfway across the bridge when the Child Lama reached the far bank.

Just as Indy had suspected, Nyak-Tso burst from the thick bush where he’d been hiding. In one hand, he held a pistol; in the other, a saber. A long, narrow saber as sharp as a razor blade.



“Ah! Ah! Ah! My fine fellow! Thought you were cleverer than me, did you? But this time your number’s up—say your prayers. There’s no one left to save you. I’m in charge now!”

While aiming his weapon at Tomo and Dentsen, he brought his blade down on one of the cables. The sharp weapon bit deep into the rope.

“Criminal! Murderer!” screamed Indy, trying to move faster. But a single wrong step could send him slipping into the gorge below.

“Yell all you want,” barked the lieutenant. “No one’ll hear you. Ah! Ah! Ah! Soon you’ll be flying to the kingdom of Shenji! Say your prayers!”

“Stop! In the name of Buddha, I command you!” cried Dentsen, boldly lunging at the bandit. But Nyak-Tso fired two shots at his feet. Some splinters hit him. He collapsed, and Tomo rushed to support him and pulled him behind a large rock.

During that time, Indiana had managed to crawl forward ten yards. But he still had ten yards to go.

“Don’t move or I’ll fill you full of lead!” the scoundrel ordered, pointing his pistol at him.

“Go ahead and try!” Indy challenged.

“You asked for it!”

Indiana barely had time to duck and avoid the shot. But, as the bullet whizzed overhead, one of his boots slipped. He lost his balance, tipped—and barely managed to catch himself!

“Whoa!” he gasped, feeling big drops of sweat form on his forehead.

Meanwhile, the bandit had taken advantage of Indy’s setback. Under his sharp blade, the cable snapped. The bridge sagged violently, causing a huge jolt. Indiana, who had just gotten back up, clung as tightly as he could to the central cable. Both legs dangled in the void.

Nyak-Tso was now attacking the central cable. Thinner than the others, it took only thirty seconds for him to finish the job, and the bandit let out a cry of triumph.

Dentsen and Tomo, sheltered behind their rock, couldn’t let this criminal kill their new friend. Tomo grabbed a rock and hurled it at the bandit. Sadly, the missile missed, and Nyak-Tso fired a shot that nearly hit the young monk.

In that brief moment, Indiana had started to crawl. But the suspension bridge, now missing a cable, was just a massive swinging trap.

“I’m in a real jam now,” thought the young adventurer. “If that scoundrel cuts through the last cable, it’s straight down I go!”

The boy’s knees were trembling. For a moment, he thought of his father and regretted not obeying him. Right now, instead of playing puppet on a string, he could be sound asleep, peaceful in his bed. Instead, here he was, 150 feet in the air. Below him raged the foamy waters where he might soon crash. Things couldn’t get worse. He shut his eyes and focused.

“I have to hold on as tight as possible. When the bridge gives way, I mustn’t let go. If I’m lucky, a thick bush will cushion my fall and I’ll get out with just some scratches. So far, my lucky star has always watched over me. No reason that should change,” he thought, bracing for the worst.

Seconds ticked by. Long, very long seconds.

Nothing!

Indiana opened his eyes. To his great surprise, Nyak-Tso no longer held his saber, nor his pistol. His hands were above his head.

Behind him stood a man. A man, high on a rock, aiming a rifle at him. This man sent by fate—was Henry Jones! Doggone it! His father, with a weapon in his hands: a first!

Indiana let out a deep sigh of relief.

He was saved.

A Tamed Bandit

Now that it was nearly daylight, Indy could make out the torrent roaring 150 feet below him.

His palms were sweaty. His heart was pounding like mad. A sort of nervous tremor had begun to shake his entire body.

“Doggone it! You can't chicken out now! This is no time to lose your balance!” he told himself, breathing deeply.

With great care, he crawled along the cable, gripping tightly. He wasn't exactly gliding along like a spider—far from it. The slack cable swayed, which didn't make the crossing any easier. But the young American had already been through worse and he'd always pulled through.

Just fifteen more feet.

Silent, anxious, and helpless, Tomo and Dentsen watched him. They looked frozen. Paralyzed by fear that their friend might fall, they didn't even dare cheer him on.

The edge of the cliff was getting close. Now Indiana was beginning to feel more confident. Ten feet to go. Five feet. One foot.

He made it. At last, he reached solid ground.

"Phew!" he sighed. "I'm safe."

Freed as well, Dentsen and Tomo rushed toward him.

"Hooray! Bravo, Indy!" they shouted in unison, applauding the boy's feat.

Henry Jones, however, didn't move. Perched on his rock, he kept a close watch on Nyak-Tso, who had dropped his weapons at his feet.

"For someone who's afraid of heights, you handle yourself pretty well," joked his father, alluding to what Indy had said back in the dormitory at the beginning of the night.

"You're right," Indiana replied. "Now I can get that job in the circus...as a tightrope walker!"

They all burst out laughing—except for Nyak-Tso, who wore a gloomy face. Thinking he might

take advantage of this moment of distraction, the criminal suddenly lunged to grab his pistol. But Professor Jones was ready:

“Hold it right there! Don’t move a muscle!”

The bandit froze. But Indiana could see a nasty gleam in his eyes. He had the look of a viper, ready to strike the moment the chance arose.

“I bet you don’t even know how to use a gun!” he shouted, challenging the American scholar.

“We’ll see about that!” Henry Jones shot back, raising the weapon to his shoulder.

The military man held his head high and puffed out his chest.

“Go ahead, shoot!”

Caught off guard, Professor Jones hesitated.

“Ha! Ha! Ha! I knew it! You’re no better at handling a rifle than you are on horseback. You’re just a bookworm!”

Stung to the core, Henry Jones lost his temper:

“What? What? What did you say, you... you...”

He fumed, trembling with rage. So much so that he lost his balance. The rifle slipped from his hands. When the butt hit the ground, it went off. Like lightning, Nyak-Tso dove to the ground. He was determined to use the scholar’s clumsiness to his

advantage. He was just inches from grabbing his pistol when it suddenly flew off the ground and landed ten feet away. A real miracle!

While Nyak-Tso was still trying to grasp what had just happened, he caught a glimpse of Indiana raising his whip for the second time. The leather strap rose in the air, coiled into a loop, then came down with a sharp, cracking snap.

“Ow! Ow!” screamed the bandit, clutching his thigh where the whip had struck.

Indiana didn’t give him a second’s respite. He unleashed a flurry of blows, raising and lashing his whip without mercy.

A few steps away, the two young Tibetan monks widened their eyes. Nyak-Tso’s screams horrified them. Because even if the bandit’s punishment was well-deserved, it was still unbearable to witness.

To shield himself from the blows raining down, the man curled up into a ball. He covered his head with his hands. But, too bad for him, that wasn’t enough. He ended up begging for mercy:

“Mercy! Mercy! I surrender!”

“Well then, scoundrel!” Indy thundered. “Have you decided to behave yourself?”

“Yes, yes, I swear!”

“Good, I like that better! But I’m warning you. Don’t even think about tricking me. One wrong move and you’ll get another taste of my whip!”

Meanwhile, the professor had recovered his weapon. He stepped toward the bandit, watching his footing carefully. Tomo and Dentsen were with him. They surrounded the soldier while Indiana began tying his wrists.

“So, Mr. Nyak-Tso, you thought you were the strongest. But guess what? You just met someone stronger than you—my son, Indiana Jones.”

As he said those last words, the professor gave Indy a conspiratorial wink. The boy could hardly believe it. His father had just called him Indiana, not Junior. That was incredible, extraordinary, fantastic. He savored the rare moment like a piece of candy.

Soon, the bandit’s wrists were tightly bound. To be doubly cautious, Indiana threw his pistol and saber into the ravine. Now disarmed, he couldn’t do any more harm.

“You’re not so full of yourself now, Mr. Nyak-Tso,” said the professor. “If I were you, I’d be ashamed!”

Nyak-Tso didn’t answer. Staring at the ground, he

gnawed on his little beard. Dentsen stepped toward him. Very calmly, he asked:

“I’d really like to know why you kidnapped me.”

The lieutenant raised his chin and looked the Child Lama straight in the eyes.

“I have my reasons!”

“Apparently my whip hasn’t taught you a lesson,” shouted Indiana, threatening. “I’ll gladly give it another go!”

The boy uncoiled his whip.

“No, no!” begged the bandit. “Alright! I’ll talk.”

“That’s more like it!” exclaimed Professor Jones.

“What would you have done with the monastery’s treasures if you’d managed to steal them?” asked Dentsen. “They’re religious artifacts—no one would buy them.”

“Wrong!” said Nyak-Tso. “I was going to sell them to a rich European antiquities dealer. That man has a vast fortune. He was ready to pay top dollar.”

“That’s awful!” exclaimed Tomo, who hadn’t said a word until now.

“You’re right,” continued Indy. “There are people back in our country who think they can buy anything with money. They have no respect for anything.”

“May I ask what you intended to do with the money?” questioned Dentsen. “Do you think it would have brought you happiness? I’m sorry for you, lieutenant.”

“You have to understand!” Nyak-Tso suddenly cried, collapsing. “I’m a victim myself!”

“A victim, huh?” said Indiana skeptically, suspecting yet another lie. “What’s this new story? I don’t believe you!”

Nyak-Tso sniffled. But his eyes were dry. Not a single tear. Indiana was probably right: the bandit was putting on an act again to try and weasel his way out.

“Here’s the truth,” he said. “As you know, we’re still at war with the Chinese. Well, some of them invaded my village. They took my wife and children. They’re holding them prisoner. I have no choice but to buy them back!”

“He’s lying!” exclaimed Indiana.

“Not necessarily,” said Dentsen, who tended to be understanding.

“In any case,” the professor interrupted, “that was no reason to kidnap you.”

“Let alone try to throw me into a ravine!” Indy added. “If he thinks a sob story is going to convince

us to let him go, he's dead wrong! Up you get, scum! We're heading back! You can tell your tale to the Grand Lama."

Nyak-Tso scowled. His pupils shot black lightning. Hatred twisted his mouth. Letting out a sound like a tiger's snarl, he slowly rose to his feet.

"A little faster than that!" ordered Henry Jones, prodding him with the tip of his weapon.

Like it or not, the bandit started walking.

Tomo led the group. Dentsen followed him along the winding path. The two boys quickly pulled ahead. Behind them came Nyak-Tso. Despite Henry Jones and his son pushing him along, the bandit dragged his feet.

Halfway up the slope, they stopped.

"I don't know what you're hoping for," said Indiana. "But don't count on escaping. We're watching you!"

At those words, the bandit's face lit up with a faintly mocking smirk. Clearly, he had some escape plan up his sleeve.

"I don't like this!" grumbled the professor. "I wonder what kind of trick he's cooking up. Maybe

this bandit's waiting for an accomplice."

"Don't worry," said Indy. "That sly old fox of a lieutenant is just trying to rattle us. I'm sure he's bluffing."

"Let's hope so," the professor agreed, gripping the butt of his weapon tighter. "Still, I won't feel at ease until we're back."

"O.K.! Let's go!"

They were now at the point where the vegetation vanished, giving way to a long slope of loose stones. Dentsen and Tomo, now at least two hundred yards ahead, stopped to wait for them. In the pale morning light, their silhouettes topped with orange caps stood out against the gray cliffs.

Suddenly, they waved their arms, shouting. Indiana and his father only caught:

"Look out... dangerous... animal..."

Taking advantage of the moment, Nyak-Tso darted straight down the slope. At the same instant, a roar tore through the air. A shadow leapt from atop a rock. It landed right in front of Indiana and his father. It was a snow leopard!

The spotted beast stood its ground, facing the two

paralyzed Americans. From its gaping mouth lined with sharp fangs came a snarl as loud as a hundred yowling cats. Its golden-yellow eyes narrowed.

“Don’t back away,” Indiana whispered to his father. “If it senses fear, it’ll attack.”

“Oo-o-kay!” Henry Jones stammered, swallowing the lump in his throat.

Slowly, without any sudden moves, Indiana reached for the handle of his whip. He unrolled it as slowly as possible.

The beast crouched, ready to pounce. It growled and spat. But Indiana wasn’t fazed. Keeping his cool, he lashed out with perfect precision. The whip cracked across the big cat’s nose and whiskers. It sprang forward. With its fur bristling, it looked twice its normal size. One of its paws slashed the air as if trying to strike an invisible enemy.

“You don’t scare me!” shouted Indy, landing a second blow, while the professor, having regained his nerve, fired a shot into the air.

That was too much for the animal. It hissed one last time, lowered its back, and with astounding

grace, slipped behind the rock from which it had jumped.

“Good riddance!”

“You’re a real champion!” his father said, full of admiration. Indiana replied with a grin:

“Clown, tightrope walker, lion tamer... I could start my own circus!”

Meanwhile, Nyak-Tso had fled. Despite his bound wrists, he was running across the rocky terrain without losing his balance. Unfortunately for him, Tomo and Dentsen had seen everything from a distance. As soon as they spotted his escape, they darted off to block his path.

After a chase through rocks and bushes, they quickly caught up with him.

Neither of them, unlike the well-trained soldier, had any experience fighting. They struggled to hold him down. But in the end, they managed to pin the man to the ground. Defeated, he didn’t resist anymore.

Indiana bound him tightly with his whip’s leather strap. That way, he wouldn’t be able to run again. This time, it really was the end for him.

Farewell Gifts

The little troupe stayed tightly grouped, and the rest of the journey to the monastery passed without incident.

As they came within sight of the first buildings, a colorful crowd surged toward them. At the head of this delegation were the Grand Lama and his guest, Alexandra.

Everyone rushed to see and touch Dentsen. Jostled, he nevertheless remained serene. He answered with simple nods, shook outstretched hands, and passed out smiles to one and all.

At last, calm returned, and the Grand Lama, wrapped in his traditional robe, spoke:

“We were worried about your disappearance. I am very happy to greet your return among us. All the more so since you bring back our venerated Child Lama,” he said, addressing Henry Jones.

“All the honor is mine! But I played only a small part in this adventure. You should rather thank these two young men,” said the professor, stepping aside to make room for Tomo and Indy.

All eyes turned to the boys.

“So you’re the ones who found and freed Dentsen?” asked the Grand Lama, a bit skeptical.

“Exactly!” replied Indiana, with a hint of arrogance. “We also unmasked the culprit. As you can see, it’s our dear Lieutenant Nyak-Tso.”

The boy forced the bandit to show himself. He lowered his head.

“No use hiding, lieutenant!” growled the Grand Lama. “You betrayed my trust!”

The man dropped to his knees.

“I’m ashamed! Deeply ashamed!”

“That’s enough,” snapped the Grand Lama. “Have a little dignity!”

“I repent!” whined the scoundrel.

“Take him away and lock him in the most secure cell! And make sure he doesn’t escape!” ordered the Grand Lama. “He will be punished according to his crime, with justice and firmness! Now, I’d like our two heroes to tell us their story. You, Tomo, speak.”

The young monk was shy. He searched for his words.

“I... uh... How can I put it? All the credit goes to Indiana. He’s the one who decided to go to the caves. He’s also the one who came up with the disguise idea. I must also admit that we took some things from the monastery’s supplies and...”

Sensing his friend’s discomfort, Dentsen came to his rescue:

“You’re too modest, Tomo. It’s important to recognize our strengths as well as our flaws.”

“That’s true, Tomo has a lot of strengths. Without him, Dentsen wouldn’t be free,” continued Indiana.

“Without you too!” added Dentsen. “You showed incredible courage. I admire you. I’ll always remember your feat on the bridge.”

“Me too!” exclaimed the young American. “I still get chills thinking about it!”

“You also scared off a leopard,” Dentsen went on.

“It only took one crack of the whip.”

All the monks listened with great attention and much admiration. The Grand Lama, who normally looked stern, joked:

“I see you had a good time.”

“Not too bad, thanks! But now, some rest would be very welcome, right, Dad?”

“Oh yes! No doubt about it.”

“Take them to my room,” said the Grand Lama. “They may use it however they wish for the remainder of their stay.”

The monks dispersed.

The Grand Lama’s room was very comfortable. It even had a bathtub. But Indiana was far too tired to enjoy it. He collapsed onto the bed and immediately sank into a deep sleep until late evening.

Half-awake, he gulped down the soup that was brought to him and fell asleep again. He didn’t wake up until the next morning, rested and refreshed.

For a week, father and son Jones were treated like royalty. They spent delightful days. Henry Jones

completed his research with Alexandra's help. The professor got along wonderfully with the adventurer, who knew far more than he did about Tibetan traditions and religion.

Meanwhile, Indiana shared the daily life of Dentsen and Tomo. In their company, he hiked the mountain along steep trails. But every outing was, for the boy, a chance to talk and better understand how to live by the path of wisdom taught by the Buddha. He discovered the grandeur of the world, the beauty of nature—majestic and dazzling. This teaching would mark him for life.

Then the moment of departure arrived.

Indiana and his father had said their goodbyes to their hosts. They headed to the stable where their mounts awaited them: for Indiana, the horse that had fallen into the ravine. As for Professor Jones, he was reunited with his poor miserable mule from the start of the trip. No replacement animal could be found. The creature greeted him with a kind of joyful whinny.

“I think he likes you,” said Indy, amused. “Anyway, he sure looks happy to see you.”

“Well, I don’t like him,” grimaced Henry Jones. “Just the thought of enduring him for three days makes me suffer. My god! I can’t even bear the idea of this torture! I swear I’d rather walk the whole way If I could. Alas!”

A voice interrupted him:

“Henry! Why didn’t you tell me about your problem?”

It was Alexandra. Tomo and Dentsen were with her. Surprised, the professor blushed.

“You shouldn’t have gone to the trouble, my dear Alexandra.”

“I didn’t go to any trouble—I came to say goodbye.”

“That’s very touching of you. I believe it will encourage me to endure this ordeal...”

“You won’t have to endure anything, my dear Henry. If you’ll accept it, I offer you one of my yaks. When you arrive, just leave it on the plain. I’ll retrieve it later.”

“You’d really do that?”

“But of course!”

“Then I accept.”

Soon after, the professor’s bags were strapped to

the yak's back. All that remained was for the American to mount his new ride. He managed it as best he could. Once seated on the wide saddle, a huge smile lit up his face. He exclaimed:

"This is as comfortable as an armchair! I might even be able to enjoy a nap along the way!"

Everyone smiled.

Yet deep inside, Indiana felt his emotion rising. He didn't like long goodbyes. They only made the pain worse.

"Let's go, Dad!"

"All right, son. If we must."

"Wait!" cried Dentsen.

The young Tibetan ran toward Indiana, whose horse was getting restless.

"I want you to have something to remember me by. Take my cap—I'm giving it to you."

Taking off his yellow cap, the Child Lama revealed his shaved head. He held it out to Indiana.

"I'm really touched," said the young adventurer. "But I can't accept. You must be very attached to your cap."

"No, no, no, I insist, I insist," repeated Dentsen.

Indy took the gift from his friend he would probably never see again. Then he took off his own

hat and, under his father's surprised gaze, handed it to the monk.

"In return, I give you my Stetson," he said.

Without another word, he spurred his horse. It bolted into a gallop.

About a hundred yards on, he stopped. From atop his horse, he waved his yellow cap.

Already trailing far behind him, Professor Jones's yak was trudging along at a slow pace.

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YOUNG INDIANA JONES AND THE CHILD LAMA

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Translation : "Right Guard" Ian A. Janosko



In the monastery of Tsadong, an atmosphere of tension and distress reigns: Dentsen, the child Lama, has been removed and sequestered. To free his new friend, Indiana, mindless of the danger, will face those who the Buddhist monks call the harmful demons...



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